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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. GEORGE WAGNER, M.A.

LATE INCUMBENT OF ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH,

BRIGHTON.

BY

JOHN NASSAU SIMPKINSON, M.A.

RECTOR OF RISHTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

THIRD EDITION.

CORRECTED AND ABRIDGED.

Cambridge:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND 23, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN,
London.
1862.

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~~200. c. 167~~
210. a. 460.

MEMOIR

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REV. GEORGE WAGNER, M.A.

Cambridge:
PRINTED BY C. J. CLAY, M.A.
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

It is needless to repeat the apologies with which this Memoir was at first introduced. The public has amply confirmed the judgment of George Wagner's friends, that such an example and such a ministry ought not to be left unrecorded. But as the Memoir in its original form was intended more particularly for the friends and Congregation of the deceased, it is due to the larger circle of readers to whom it is now addressed that it should be abridged and somewhat altered.

Abridgment might of course have been carried further still. But as the interest of the Memoir depends very materially on little anecdotes and traits of character, trivial perhaps sometimes in themselves, yet collectively essential to the picture, and as its usefulness to clergymen in particular de[illegible]nly on the minuter details of minis[illegible]t is hoped that due limits [illegible]ht to have been exceeded.

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Of much which I have related I was myself an eye-witness, during many years of admiring friendship commenced at Herstmonceux (where I was for some time Curate to Archdeacon Hare), or indeed before that at Cambridge. Still the greater part of the materials have been contributed by others, many of them more intimately associated with George Wagner than myself. The principal of these are mentioned in the course of the work. But I may make more especial acknowledgment here to his parishioners and coadjutors at Dallington, James Sands and Caroline Weston, for their assistance in that part of the Memoir; adding that for my account of the Brighton period, I am most particularly indebted to Mrs Vicars and Miss Macaulay.

His own family, at whose request I undertook the work, have lent me the most cordial aid throughout; above all his elder sister, who has not only been the chief collector of contributions from others, but my sole authority for some parts of her brother's life.

Besides the mass of letters, journals, and other papers which I have carefully gone through, I have made it a great point to study the Sermons of my friend; many hundreds of which have aided, as nothing else could have done, in developing the impressions here reproduced.

In the present edition some remarks have been suppressed which were ventured on before, especially on controverted points. I have deferred to the opinion of many of my critics, expressed both publicly and in private, that such remarks on the part of a biographer are uncalled for and generally unwelcome. But while withholding the expression of my own judgment, I have not thought it necessary, nor indeed consistent with truth, to suppress the sentiments of George Wagner also, when differing from opinions usually current. And in two or three instances I have been enabled to state more confidently, though with some modification, things which were only advanced conjecturally before. Is it too much to hope that these sentiments may help to encourage larger views on some points of theology which now too often minister to disunion?

No one can doubt that an example like George Wagner's is most useful and edifying for the purpose of strengthening Christian faith, and stimulating Christian exertion. But surely it is scarcely less useful as a call to Christian union, indicating as it does not only the essential source of holiness and spiritual life, but the essential grounds also of Christian fellowship.

And certainly it will be allowed that such an example pleads strongly for the maintenance of

hood had commenced—Herstmonceux Place, near Hailsham, in Sussex; the seat, till a short time before, of the Hare family; and the abode in childhood of Archdeacon Hare, whose subsequent tenure of the family living has made the name of the parish familiar to thousands both in England and abroad. It was a home, the natural charms of which would endear it to any one who is capable of appreciating them. The house stands in the park, which contains the magnificent ruin of Herstmonceux Castle, the ancient feudal abode of the Dacres of the South; and the ranges of wooded hills over which the parish spreads, while on one side they overhang the broad expanse of Pevensey Level, and command a view of the sea beyond, look upwards, on the other, into the heart of the Weald of Sussex. Here, under the affectionate care of his parents, the second of their four children, George Wagner grew up amidst the ordinary influences of an English country gentleman's home. He was early familiarized, not only with the sports and occupations of such a life, but with its duties and its sympathies also. He saw his father busy as a magistrate, and as a benevolent protector of the poor; his mother, as the friend and adviser of the cottagers around her, and the principal organizer and dispenser of the charities of the parish. Carefully and religiously brought up by his mother, he not only showed himself a docile and amiable child, but ever evinced respect and attachment to the scriptural doctrines in which he was instructed.

In the usual branches of education he made good progress, and gave signs of the clear understanding and powers of application which he afterwards used so well: and at the age of ten, with

no preparatory schooling but such as he received for a short time at the house of his maternal uncle, the Rev. J. C. F. Tufnell, a clergyman who took at that time one other pupil, the only son of the late Archbishop Howley, he was removed to Eton, where he was placed, though so young, in the Upper School. His Eton career, which lasted for nearly eight years, was not only blameless, but creditably, though not brilliantly, successful. It was the testimony of his tutor (Rev. Charles Wilder), that throughout the whole time he had not seen a fault in him; while with his schoolfellows he was a general favourite. And not only did he attain the rank of the Sixth Form, but achieved the distinction, which is of still greater lustre in the eyes of schoolboys, of becoming a member of the Eleven; in which character he played in the annual cricket matches at Lord's in the year 1835, and contributed by a large score of his own to the victories obtained in that year by Eton over both Winchester and Harrow. He was good at all field exercises at this time, having a light active figure, with a quick eye. He was known at Eton, also, as the best boxer of his size; and though he never provoked a quarrel himself, instances are not wanting of his spirit and prowess in challenging boys bigger and stronger than himself, upon the reception of an insult, or in defence of a younger schoolfellow. At home his favourite amusement was hunting with beagles. Shooting he cared less for. Of riding he was always fond. During the whole of his school life, his spirits were remarkably high and buoyant; and for many years his cherished desire was to go into the army. But this intention seems to have been abandoned before the period at which we have

arrived; more serious reflections having, at any rate, diminished the intensity of the wish. The story told by him in his little book on *Children's Thoughts* (see page 7) refers really to himself, and to the effect produced upon him one year in the holidays by the study of the Scriptures with his aunt, Miss Wagner.

I once knew a little boy (he says) who thought, as many boys do now, of being a soldier; he used to dream of battles and victories. Did he ever become a soldier? No. He had a good aunt, and she used sometimes to read the Bible with him, and it interested him very much; and then he thought, "No, I will not be a soldier; I should like to be a minister of Christ and explain this beautiful book." His father was surprised to find how all his thoughts were changed.... You see, then, that all his former thoughts about being a soldier were *vain* thoughts; all the time which he spent in thinking about the battles he would fight, and the courage he would display, were lost.

Still, neither at that time, nor at the time of his Confirmation, which took place at Eton, do his religious convictions appear to have been deep enough, or permanent enough, to make anything like an epoch in his spiritual life.

In the winter of 1835 he was removed from Eton, and placed (as is a very general custom at that school) with a private tutor before going up to Cambridge. The tutor selected was the Rev. Julius Hare, who had only just settled down at the Rectory of Herstmonceux, and whose great attainments and reputation forbade the parents of the young student from looking further from home for the advantages they were desirous to procure for him.

It was, indeed, a singular advantage to be

brought thus in contact with a mind like Archdeacon Hare's. Under his tuition a genuine love of study first showed itself in George Wagner: nor was it possible to be uninfluenced by the generous enthusiasm for all that is wise or beautiful, the deep learning, the scrupulous fairness of mind, and the fearless love of truth, which he saw in his excellent instructor. The feeling of deep respect and admiration thus produced, grew and strengthened with the affectionate intercourse of later years, and was sanctified by their increasing sympathy in the subjects dearest to the heart of both. And it is, doubtless, to Archdeacon Hare's influence and example, that we must mainly attribute that freedom from narrow views, that hearty appreciation of the best of the German theologians, and that broader sympathy with Christians of different tenets and temperaments, which distinguished George Wagner from the generality of the Evangelical School.

He remained with Archdeacon Hare about nine months. His only fellow-pupil there was an old Eton schoolfellow, the late Lord Strangford; but, besides continued intercourse with the members of his own family at Herstmonceux Place, he enjoyed also the society of many of his tutor's own friends, men eminent for ability, among whom may be mentioned the late Rev. John Stirling, then Curate of the Parish.

At the end of these months he started with his family for Paris; where they were to spend the winter. He had never been on the Continent before, and thoroughly enjoyed the novelty of the scenes around him. His time of study was chiefly devoted to the acquirement of French and Italian; but he threw himself with zest into general society:

and ample opportunities for this were open to him; for not only were his family on terms of intimate intercourse with many interesting English residents, among whom the most remarkable was Admiral Sir Sidney Smith; but saw much of some of the leading Frenchmen of the day, especially M. Berryer, the legitimist, and Prince Charles de Broglie, formerly Archbishop of Ghent, uncle of the President of the Chamber of Peers. Thus a thirst for knowledge had been aroused within him, and steadier habits of application formed, not without an awakened desire for distinction; while, at the same time, an enlarged acquaintance with society, and with literary and public men, was preparing him to take his place in the world. All, meanwhile, was satisfactory and promising in his outward character and conduct. An impression afterwards gained ground among many, that at this time of his life he was what is called a *wild* young man. Nothing could be more erroneous; though such an impression would be produced, not unnaturally, by the language which sometimes he may have used when speaking of himself, and by the deep experimental knowledge which he showed of the depravity of our natural inclinations. Exemplary in his domestic relations, amiable, modest, and intelligent, industrious and regular in his habits, free from all vicious tastes, pure and blameless in moral behaviour, he seemed to the eye of man to need nothing but a steady and undeviating progress in the course he had begun. But such was not the course marked out for him by the Sovereign Ruler of all hearts. A more searching and painful discipline was to fit him for higher work, than as yet he had contemplated or imagined.

It was in the following year, soon after his return to England, in May 1837, that a visit to Brighton led to the great change of feelings, motives, and principles, which stamped his life indelibly from that time forward. His uncle, the Vicar, had lately engaged the Rev. James Vaughan as his Curate; and intercourse with this new friend, and attendance on his ministrations, led, by God's blessing, to a flood of conviction which now poured over his mind and heart. The Word of God, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, pierced even to the dividing asunder of his soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. He was alarmed, arrested, self-condemned, with thoughts which he could not resist. He saw everything in a new light—himself, his past life, his present state, his future prospects, in the light of eternity and of God's revealed truth; and by the light of the same truth, he was soon enabled to see also the way of peace and holiness,—peace which he had not conceived before, holiness far beyond his former aspirations.

Here, then, we must pause to consider the nature of this great crisis. Without a right understanding of this, it is impossible to understand the character and the life which it is our object to consider. And according as we appreciate and enter into it, so shall we consider George Wagner to be a mistaken though well-meaning enthusiast, or a pattern and a light of Christian truth raised up to cheer, to encourage, and to guide.

No record of this change, written by himself at the time, remains to be consulted. But letters, sermons, and journals of a later date, supply a sufficient substitute; together with that witness

of the human heart in response to the Voice of God, which is necessarily the same in its main character everywhere.

Here, then, are some of his own words first.

Eleven years ago (he writes in 1848, MS. Sermon on Eph. iii. 8), it pleased God, of His abundant mercy, to awaken me to a sense of my sinfulness, and to reveal His Son Jesus Christ in me. For nineteen years I had been an entire stranger to Jesus Christ. Though taught in my childhood the Word of God, and though I felt at one time much interest in it, and had many convictions of sin, yet my heart remained closed. Jesus Christ often knocked there; but alas! in my ignorance, folly, and unbelief, I held down the latch, and did not let Him in. I loved sin and the present evil world. Yet in His wonderful longsuffering, God bore with me; and did not cast me off, as He might so justly have done. No. In His love and tender compassion, He plucked me as a brand from the burning; and sprinkled the blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sin, upon my heart.

Or, take another passage, manifestly drawn from experience (Sermon on Job xxiii. 10):—

When the Spirit of God enlightens the sinner's mind, and opens his heart—when he becomes conscious for the first time of his own exceeding sinfulness, and the alienation of the heart from God—when he feels that he cannot any more seek his rest in the creature or the world, and cannot be contented without the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to God—oh! then self-condemned, perplexed, and weary, he often cries in his secret chamber, unheard by the ear of man, "Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to His seat!" No heart can be drawn by the Spirit of Jesus, without this longing to *find* God. ....Do you ask, "Where shall I find Him?" The Bible gives the answer, "In Jesus, By faith in Jesus."

When through grace you cast yourself on Christ, then you are at the foot of God's Throne, pardoned and at peace with God.

Or, see the instructive light thrown by the following passages on the story of his boyhood (Sermon on Job xxix. 2, 3) :—

When the heart is first led to repentance by the grace of God, it is the office of memory to bring up the comparative happiness of earlier years. The sinner thinks of his wanderings; he sees the vanity of those worldly pleasures which have seared and deadened his heart, and led him to restrain prayer before God; the vanity of the idols which have kept his heart from God. He feels how low he has fallen, gradually, but, alas! surely. He has had, it may be, many checks of conscience, and felt many strivings of the spirit; but they were not heeded. Now he begins to look *forward*. Oh, what awaits him? What *can* he expect, but to reap the wages of sin, even eternal death? He looks *back*. He remembers the days of his early childhood—the words, it may be, of a Christian mother—her watchful care of his soul—the interest which he once felt in his now neglected Bible. How great the contrast between the first years and the last—the first sweetened by so many simple joys, the last darkened by feelings of guilt and remorse! Is it possible to have such joys, and even higher ones, renewed? Yes, it is. The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin; from the burden of guilt, and from the inward defilement of heart. The Spirit of God can bring us to our Father's house, where there is bread enough, and to spare; can create in us a spirit of childlike dependence on God, and a love for joys which are at once more simple and more elevated than the joys of early childhood—the joys not of an earthly, but of a Heavenly Parent's love.

And again (MS. Sermon on St. Matt. v. 3) :—

It is a very solemn time when the eye is first bent within, and begins to discover the havoc which sin has made in our souls—when the hand of God leads us, as it did the prophet of old, into the chambers of imagery within, and we see great abominations there—when it conducts us from one chamber to another of our hearts; and the further we go the more we see darker things, and discover that the righteousness wherein we trusted is a thing of nought before God, and that the very springs of thought and action are corrupted; so that those deeds of benevolence, which have gained the approval of our fellow-creatures, have not been pure before God. Then, too, new and unfelt difficulties throng our path—the difficulty of prayer, the difficulty of setting God before us, the difficulty of trusting in him. We are bewildered with our own feelings about our past history, about our present condition; and not only bewildered, but humbled with the sense of our sins and our unworthiness. We cry from the very depths of our hearts, "Woe is me!" when, behold, the voice of love and truth calls us blessed. Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

It will be seen that the leading idea, underlying these touching descriptions of the experience of an awakened spirit, is that of *personal contact with a personal God.* This was the overwhelming thought which flashed upon his heart in that trying season; producing terror, and anguish, and despair, while he contemplated his alienation from the Holy One; but brightening into joy unutterable, as by faith he learned to see the oneness of that personal God with the Son of Man, whose life and death, and mediation, and promises, were given him as the foundation of his hope. Not that he had ever doubted of the truth of the Gospel before; nor yet had wilfully refused it or

set it aside. He had reverenced God, and feared Him; he had felt the beauty of God's pure and holy law, and had felt also at times the suitableness and the need of salvation through a mediating Saviour. But the apprehension of unseen things had been dim, and shadowy, and distant; eternal truths were all things of the future to him; God was absent from the world of his experience and his interests. But now the veil of the invisible universe was drawn aside. The Eye of God seemed to open upon him, and he stood in that awful presence. Self, which had hitherto been the centre of his consciousness, shrank trembling and confounded beneath the gaze of his Creator; and he felt that henceforth God must be his Life, or all was hopeless vacancy. God must be his all: the centre round which his whole being should revolve, not only imparting light and warmth and life, but swaying and controlling every movement of his course. And all this was offered, given, secured to him through the Gospel of Christ! With awe-struck adoration, with tearful gratitude, with unreserved renunciation of self, he embraced the hope that was set before him; and clung to that unseen Saviour, to whom (though so long professing his name) he felt that he had indeed been a stranger heretofore.

Much has been written, and will be written in all ages of the Christian Church, on the subject of Conversion. Yet who has truly defined that term? Such a definition can hardly be made sufficiently comprehensive to be universally true; for in order to make it correctly, the state must previously be defined, out of which the transition is described. And how wide is the range between those who are still in utter darkness, and those who are not far from

the kingdom of God; between those who have been nurtured in heathenism, and those who have been baptized and brought up as Christians! No good is done by confounding together all preliminary states, for the sake of insisting on a uniform process, which is substantiated neither by Scripture, nor by fact. Many is the heart that has been saddened by such definitions, whom God hath not made sad; the experience of particular minds, or classes of minds, being forced upon the acceptance of others who cannot and ought not to receive it. The truth is, that Conversion cannot be defined; taking that word, in the sense usually accepted, as the critical and decisive change by which the heart and spirit is turned to God, turned away from the power of darkness to the reception and enjoyment of heavenly light. The workings of the human heart cannot be comprised under any universal formula. We can never understand, and never express, the various ways in which darkness, and error, and doubt, keep their hold on various men; how the several points of God's measureless truth, or His claims on the obedience and devotion of His creatures, are effectually brought within the apprehension of those who are under His teaching; what particular step in spiritual progress is, or seems to be, needful in each individual case as the critical and decisive one. How often a truth, which to some minds is obvious and familiar, yet unproductive all the while of spiritual results, is brought home to another heart with a freshness and power which is as life from the dead—proves to be the one truth which was needed as the supplement to its former convictions, the one link completing thenceforth the electric chain that unites the heart to God!

It would only be a repetition of the error here indicated, to attempt to draw a general rule from the case which is before us; and to suggest that such a change of feeling as has been just described must necessarily be gone through, before a man can stand in a state of acceptance with God.

Yet there is one truth, which the experience of such men as George Wagner seems peculiarly designed to teach us; a truth which would certainly be lost sight of in the Church from generation to generation, or thrown into discredit by the extravagances of fanatics, were it not for the living witness of men like him, at once spiritually-minded, humble, thoughtful, and practical: namely, that God may be *found* by the believer in Christ—truly, actually, consciously found, apprehended, rested on. It is no delusion, no dream of the heated imagination, that the spirit of the devout Christian holds conscious communion with the Most High—not only *reconciled* through Christ, but *brought near*—able to pour into the ear of the Eternal Father its confessions, its sorrows, its aspirations; and receiving back, by means undreamed of by the world, assurance of forgiveness, and acceptance, and strength, and peace. And hence the secret of that victory over the world and over self—that energy, and purity, and unfailing charity—that delight in labours and efforts distasteful to the natural heart—that elevation of character, and also of intellect, which even the thoughtless wonder at, and even the ungodly are constrained to admire.

George Wagner's own words have shown that the acute sense of guilt, and intense distress of mind, with which he was at first overwhelmed, were soon relieved in his case by the all-sufficient

balm of the Gospel message. "It was probably owing to the exquisite simplicity with which he always received truth," writes Mr Vaughan, "that he was able very soon to apprehend that for which he was apprehended in Christ Jesus, and to come forth into the liberty with which He maketh His people free. From that time, his eminently bright and sunny views of religion were, I believe, never clouded. A clear apprehension of the love of God, that reward so often granted in this world to early decision, gave its radiance to his life; and with a consistency which I have seldom seen equalled and never surpassed, he consecrated every power with which he was endowed, to that one great satisfying end of all intelligent existence, the glory of God."

The time had now arrived, when in the natural course of things he would have entered on his University life, as he was already more than nineteen years of age; but his family had resolved to spend the winter in Italy, and it was determined that George should accompany them. They left England accordingly, in September 1837; but by the time they had reached Baden Baden, the projected tour was abandoned, owing to the prevalence of cholera in Italy; and they returned to Neuwied, a little town on the Rhine, well known as the seat of one of the mediatized principalities of Germany, and chiefly remarkable besides for the Moravian establishment which it contains. "The Château at Neuwied," writes his sister, "was inhabited by a princely family, as noted for their kindness as for their accomplishments; the young Prince of Wied; his admirable aunt, the Princess Louisa, a friend of Queen Adelaide; and Prince Charles, and Prince Maximilian, his uncles; the

former a clever artist, the latter an enterprising traveller in the Brazils. The Princess Louisa was fond of English, which she wrote and spoke; and she and the rest of the family shewed the greatest hospitality to the few English residents in Neuwied. The customs of the little town were most primitive. George accompanied his father to the early dinners of the Prince, and his mother and sisters to the concerts and large receptions of the Princess Louisa, at six o'clock in the evening, to which the guests walked. At this time he was fervently desirous of leading a holy life; and his mother remembers the length and earnestness of his prayers during that winter, and how she often entreated him to retire earlier to his bed. About this time, he formed a habit of choosing a verse on which to meditate whilst dressing, and this habit he ever after continued. He was beginning to feel large parties undesirable; but did not decide on declining them. He tried to turn the conversation to that topic which interested him so much; and made it a practice to devote the largest portion of his society to any one in the room the least likely, from appearance or manner, to meet with attention and sympathy. But his great delight lay in intercourse with some Christian friends, especially Capt. W., a brother of Lord ———. He used to accompany Capt. W. in his visits to the poor; and in their close rooms, which are impervious to air (for they nail up their windows in the autumn for the winter months, and heat the rooms with stoves), he first became subject to pains in the head and face, which often hindered his Cambridge studies. His life was henceforth one of daily suffering and inconvenience; and he knew

not what it was to feel well for one whole day, till he went to Brighton to live.

"He took a lively interest in one poor man who was very ill; and who having a painful operation to undergo a second time, for the first had failed*, asked that it might be performed on Good Friday, in order that he might be strengthened by the thought of our Lord's greater sufferings. At this time he joined a weekly meeting for Bible reading and prayer at the house of some Christian friends. In after life he always looked back to the acquisition of German as especially valuable to a clergyman, from the great superiority of some of the German Commentaries on the Bible to our own, in particular of Olshausen's valuable work, which he studied to the last. He lamented greatly the disposition which he saw in many, to condemn all the German theologians on account of the Rationalism of some. His knowledge of German was very good; he could take up the most difficult German book on Theological subjects, and translate it with perfect ease. He saw a greatdeal of the Moravians; and highly valued the quiet, devoted brethren. He was often a worshipper in their chapel, and attended all their peculiar services, such as the midnight one, on the last day of the year; when it is customary, a little before midnight, that the Bishop should remind the congregation of their faults and shortcomings during the year which is fast ebbing. A blast of trumpets interrupts the preacher—the new year has begun—and he changes his tone to one of hope for the future."

The greater part of the spring and summer of 1838 was spent at Herstmonceux Place, where he

* See "Sermons to Children," p. 65.

employed himself in study, and in visiting the poor of the parish; and it was not till the October of that year, that he commenced his residence at Trinity College, Cambridge. The plan he set before him, for his University career, was a plain and definite one—to prepare himself for that ministry to which he had devoted himself; and for that end to give his mind with conscientious and unswerving diligence to the studies and discipline of the place; yet above all, day by day, and hour by hour, to consecrate himself to God, body, soul, and spirit; to bring every thought of his heart into captivity to the law of Christ, striving in all things after conformity to his Redeemer; to make this the one supreme object of his daily life, to which every other consideration was to be sacrificed unsparingly; every personal indulgence, every social advantage, every prospect of intellectual distinction (to the charms of which he was keenly sensible), to be counted as dust in the balance, and unhesitatingly swept away, if conscience and sober judgment should pronounce it any impediment to the dedication of himself to God. In accordance with this determination to devote himself entirely to the service of God, and to sacrifice everything for His sake, he would certainly have become a missionary eventually, and would have consecrated himself to that work from the beginning of his College days; but the miserable state of his health, and still more his infirmity of deafness, convinced him that he was physically incapable of such duties, and he soon abandoned the idea.

More of his secret history is open to us at this time than at any other period of his life; as the full and continuous journals are preserved, which

he kept for the purpose of watching and disciplining himself. But surely it is not well to remove, except in part, a veil which was never intended to be lifted; which even those who are nearest to him touch with tenderness and reverence. It is a question whether such disclosures have not been made too indiscriminately in many Memoirs; that, for instance (in its enlarged form at any rate), of Henry Martyn, to whose journals these of George Wagner bear a great resemblance. Besides, they leave on the reader's mind a mistaken impression of the writer's character and experience. He sees little of the happiness, the cheerful self-possession, the quiet activity, and the lightness of a purified heart, with which the faithful servant of Christ discharges his daily duties, and mixes beneficently with his fellow-men. The picture is darkened too much by the painful struggles, the striving after attainments ever rising out of reach, the unreserved self-condemnation, the piteous self-abhorrence, which mark the dealings of the soul with its God in the midst of temptation and spiritual discipline; and which often deepen in intensity of expression, as the heart is purified more and more from "the corruption that is in the world through lust."

It was no ordinary course of daily devotion which the young student imposed on himself. Attendance at chapel both morning and evening, which he always accounted one of the great privileges of College life, and for which he prepared himself by special acts of private devotion (rising at six, that there might be no lack of time for the purpose); stated seasons of retirement for prayer at different hours of the day; and a large portion of the evening scrupulously kept for the study of

the Bible, for communion with his God, and for strict and searching examination of every act and word which the day had witnessed; this was the system which he marked out for himself, and adhered to. The usual hours were devoted to study; and something less than the usual interval allowed for exercise, for much of which indeed his increasing bodily weakness rendered him unfit. The game of "*fives*" was one in which he sometimes joined with two or three intimate friends; but even an hour of this would prove too much exertion. He usually preferred a quiet walk; and that, for the most part, in solitude.

It is one of my greatest enjoyments here (he writes in one of his letters home), to walk by myself in Trinity Gardens, and think of you all in connection with Him who has so mercifully united us together in that bright hope which is the only anchor of the soul; and which, the stronger it is, the more it will enable us to rejoice in pain and tribulation, will support us in our fearful struggles with ourselves and wrestlings with the sin of the natural man, and cheer our last hours with a near bright view of the inheritance which Jesus has purchased for us. Oh, dear ——, we can never sufficiently estimate the preciousness of this hope, or give sufficient glory to the free grace of our God. May He impress it deeper on our hearts, that whatever breath moves on their renovated strings may call forth a new song of thanksgiving!

The general society, too, of the place was distasteful to him; though he never shrank from it in a censorious or puritanical spirit; and for some time he did not discover many fellow-students like-minded with himself. Even when he did, it always seemed to him that little good was to be gained from the ordinary way of meeting.

Went to ——'s rooms (he writes on one occasion) both after dinner and after chapel. Several religious men there. But when many are collected together, the conversation is seldom edifying. And it does one little good to be in the society of religious men, unless their conversation is holy; although there is comfort in the security, that nothing will be spoken which is against the glory of God. But this negative good is unsatisfactory.

Deafness, too,—an infirmity by which he was deeply tried,—shut him out in great measure from intercourse with others; and at first he lived very much alone. Not that he accounted this infirmity as a trial hard to bear. On the contrary, he regarded it with characteristic contentment and thankfulness.

I feel sure (he writes in his journal), that it is out of His infinite mercy that God has given me deafness, to keep me from an over-love of society. An especial blessing at Cambridge. I would that I were often far deafer than I am.

Some chosen friends, however, shared his sympathy from the beginning: and, as may be supposed, he soon sought out and attached himself to Mr Carus, and Mr (now Bishop) Perry; whose affectionate interest in the young men of piety in the University, at that time, is well known to all who are acquainted with Cambridge. Their friendship, and the meetings at their rooms, were a great refreshment and help to him; but the church which he selected for his attendance on Sunday, was that of Professor Scholefield, finding, upon trial, that he could hear his voice the best. Later in his University life, he was induced by circumstances to attach himself, in preference,

to the ministry of Dr Spence. St Mary's, the University Church, he did not often attend: but twice during his undergraduate career he had the happiness of listening to courses of sermons delivered from that pulpit by his former tutor and the minister of his parish, Archdeacon Hare, —the two well-known courses on the Victory of Faith, and the Mission of the Comforter. The former are noticed especially in his Journal.

Went to St Mary's. Mr Hare preached a beautiful sermon on Faith. Oh! how greatly did I, do I, need it! May God bless the words which he speaks, and fill him with His Holy Spirit!

Again:—

Went to St Mary's. Mr Hare preached his last sermon. Quite refreshing to see his love to Jesus!

During the latter course (the Mission of the Comforter), he writes home to his sister:—

I feel as if I had almost part of the parish here in Mr Hare. He preached a sermon, of an hour and a quarter, in St Mary's, on Sunday. I thought it very interesting. His text is St John xvi. 7. . . . I had a little walk with him on Monday. He was delighted with his congregation, which was a very large one. He was full of feeling.

On another occasion, his uncle, the Vicar of Brighton, preached before the University. He notices the Sermon (upon the Trinity) with pleasure and admiration.

He did not, for some time, attempt, knowing that this would be beyond his strength, any work among the poor of Cambridge, though he failed not to try to influence for good the College servants with whom he was connected: but he early

accepted the office of local Secretary to the Society for the Conversion of the Jews, a Society in which he was always deeply interested. This office made it part of his duty to solicit subscriptions from such undergraduates as might be induced to contribute: and, like all who were engaged in a similar work, he must sometimes have met with painful and uncourteous rebuffs. But the purity and elevation of his character raised him above all vexatious interference, on the part of those who did not agree with him. He was universally respected wherever he was known, no less by the undergraduates than by the College authorities. His modesty, and habitual dislike of notoriety, kept him always in the background.

"So far as an ordinary observer would remark," says his tutor, the Rev. J. W. Blakesley, "he only appeared during his undergraduate career, as a young man of retiring habits, though perfectly cheerful and genial: attentive to the ordinary pursuits of the University, though not ambitious of distinction; intimate with a few select friends, though not in the least degree harsh or uncharitable to others. I should doubt whether any one had ever heard him utter an unfavourable opinion of any person: and probably, he never had an enemy in his life."

It was a duty, too, which he always felt it incumbent on him to observe, and which he discharged with singular success, to show unfailing cheerfulness in all his demeanour and conduct. The atmosphere of College, however, was not congenial to him; and he felt it a great relief and happiness to return home in the Vacation; to indulge in the unreserved intercourse of affection with his family, and to renew his ministrations

among the poor. "I fear," he says on the first occasion of thus returning home, "that I look forward with a more than lawful pleasure, to seeing my family. All is uncertain. God alone is a sure rock and refuge. Lord, let me never have any joy except I find it in Thee." His life at home was governed by the same strict rules as those which he imposed on himself at College. He resolutely maintained the practice of early rising, as early as five o'clock, when circumstances allowed it; and the time thus redeemed he consecrated to prayer, and the study of the Bible. "I ought to secure two hours, at least, for these purposes," he says, "before my day begins." And as the day began, so it continued. "Pray always *five* times a day," is the resolution he records, "at regular times, besides when moved to it." After breakfast, he devoted an hour to reading the Bible with his sisters. "He chose one of the Epistles: and examined each verse critically, as well as practically, turning the whole into a prayer at the end. Often did his fervency lead him to extend this time far beyond the hour; till his mother's step was heard on the little staircase which led to his room, softly summoning her daughters, and reminding them that there were family duties to be attended to." The rest of the morning was assigned to ordinary study; unless at such times as he gave instruction to his brother, or seized an opportunity of interesting him too in the subjects dearest to his own heart. In the afternoon, if not necessarily prevented, he would go out among the poor of the parish, visiting especially the district which was peculiarly under the charge of his mother, and bestowing his most earnest and unremitting care on cases which ap-

peared to need his attention most. On returning from such visits, it was his constant practice, one eminently characteristic of his humble and loving Christian spirit, to devote at least a quarter of an hour to intercessory prayer for those to whom he had been ministering.

It may well be imagined what effect the visits of such a man must have produced on the poor. Yet was he most careful never to trench upon the offices of the ordained ministry. The Rev. Francis Garden was Curate to Mr Hare at that time; and was much won by the lovely Christian character of the young layman, and with the unaffected humility which always sought to pay the greatest deference to himself as a clergyman. "Yet in all our intercourse, at this time," he says, "I remember but one thing that can fairly be called an illustrative anecdote. You must yourself have seen how fond he was of the rich and poor of Herstmonceux. When he came back for a vacation, their condition, and the revisiting them, were for him what far inferior objects are for most people, on their coming home. Well, I remember having a walk with him through the parish, and going together to see a poor old woman, who could not know much of me, as I was but a new comer, but to whom George was obviously no stranger. Consequently, my presence was not unacceptable under his wing, but *his* visit was the main consolation. He obviously kept trying, though trying quite in vain, to direct attention to me as the Clergyman, and as the person who ought to take the leading share in the conversation. But it would not do. She knew him well—I was a stranger. I need not, I hope, say that all this was quite what I think should have been. A poor

old woman was not the best judge conceivable of what difference is made, or not made, by the reception of ordination; but she might be a good judge, and was, of a tried Christian friend."

The Sunday was always for him a day of peculiar enjoyment; and he sought to consecrate every minute, and this with the most unreserved devotion, to the service and glory of God. "Oh that every day could be a Sunday!" he would sometimes exclaim. This delight in it was particularly vivid at home: and he records the pleasure he felt in returning to his own village church, and the ministrations of his own parish Pastor. "Mr Hare's reading in church (Christmas-day) was grand, and assisted my devotions....Mr Hare's sermon most profitable. Many searching questions. To nearly all of which I must answer *no*—awful no! What a blessing that God permits so sinful a worm to go to His house of prayer!"

The sermon here spoken of was preached on the last Sunday in December; and on the last day of 1838 we find him thus pouring forth his heart in secret confession:—

The last day of the year, and one of great importance. O Lord, be Thou present with me, whilst I think of my many and grievous acts of disobedience to Thy holy will, and grant that I may be humbled! Are my prayers more earnest? No. Is my love to God and my dear Saviour more fervent? No. Is my faith stronger? No. Do I hate sin more? Lord, Thou knowest the sinfulness of my heart. Teach me, oh teach me this. Are my thoughts purer and holier? No. Do I know more of the wickedness of my own heart, and of my own infirmities and weaknesses? (Thou, O Lord, alone knowest them all. Grant, Lord, that I may not be in error.) *I think I do.* Do the

fruits of the Spirit abound in me more? No. Do the things of this world occupy my thoughts less, and am I looking more earnestly for a better kingdom? No. Am I striving more to do God's holy will, and to advance His glory? No. Have I a more Christian spirit? No. Am I redeeming my time by seeking to be conformed to the image of my Redeemer? No. Am I more grateful for all the infinite mercies of my God? No.—What mercy that God did not cut me off this time two years, when I tempted Him by my sinfulness, and hardness, and thoughtlessness, to punish me! Lord, pardon all these my sins, and fill me with a right sense of Thy mercies, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

With such earnest breathings of a renewed heart the year 1839 began, and before the end of January he had returned to his studies at Cambridge. The remainder of his University life shall be told succinctly; for indeed the reader has already seen what the character of that life was —a character preserved uniformly to the end, only with increasing holiness, and enlarged liberty of spirit. At Cambridge, diligence, regularity, thankful appreciation and use of the advantages within his reach; while with unwavering faithfulness he "left not his first love," but consecrated all to God, resolutely keeping himself unspotted from the world;—at home, family affection, and a foretaste of the ministry he was looking forward to; but all controlled by a wise and sober recollection of his present duties and position, and regulated by a self-imposed discipline, more rigorous by far than any which was laid upon him at the University.

These alternations were varied occasionally by more distant excursions, and by visits to friends and relations; amongst which he enjoyed most of

all his visits to Brighton and to Eastbourne;—to Brighton, where his aunt, and his valued friend Mr Vaughan, responded to all the deepest feelings of his heart;—to Eastbourne, where he was very intimate with the Vicar and Mrs Pitman; and, above all, with a sister of the latter, Miss Bird, who was ever one of his dearest friends and most trusted counsellors in the subject uppermost in his thoughts.

But we must now mark more distinctly his progress and success as a student. At Eton, and under the tuition of Archdeacon Hare, his attention had been chiefly directed to classical studies: and in this branch of knowledge he had shown considerable promise, and attained to very fair proficiency as a scholar, in the usual acceptation of the term. But this was not the natural direction of his intellectual tastes. His mind was more inclined, and more fitted for mathematical study; for which his clear understanding, and power of concentrating his mind on the subject before him, gave him great aptitude. This was accordingly the line of study which he adopted principally at Cambridge; and in which he took a deep and lively interest—too deep, as he sometimes accused himself, through the sensitive tenderness of his conscience.

My thoughts too much occupied (so he often complains) by worldly things, and the pursuit of human learning—proved by this; that when I awake, my thoughts, instead of resting on God, settled on Algebra. This I must struggle against; Lord, give me the victory.

As the first great College Examination approached, in the May of 1839, we find this holy

jealousy over his heart expressing itself more constantly and more strongly.

My mind is in a frightfully nervous state (he writes), thinking of examinations, and the attainment of human learning, instead of being calm and composed and resting upon Jesus....

Again:—

Much spiritual blindness. I fear that reading for an examination is a very deadening thing. But I hope, by the grace of God, that I shall soon be raised from this sorrowful state, and delivered from so great temptations, and be enabled to worship God in an humble and quiet spirit.

The examination came; and beautiful was the preparation of heart with which this devoted Christian student entered upon what he felt at once to be a duty and a snare.

Got up at half-past five, dressed, read the Bible, and prayed until seven. Went to chapel, and enjoyed it more than usual. After chapel, prayed and read the Bible until eight. Read Euclid, and went in to the examination in a confused state. This is the first day. Have not done well: my body has not been well, and every sign of breaking down before it is over. Prayed before and after dinner. This evening my mind jaded. Lord, pardon my manifold infirmities, and grant that I may do all things to Thy glory. By the tender mercy of God, have not suffered much from ambition. Shall be thankful when it is over. Lord, grant that my mind may be stayed upon Thee, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

The examination ended: the lists came out; and, as Wagner's friends had hoped and expected, his name appeared in the first class. But this early success was not followed by other College

honours, as might have been expected. He continued, indeed, to work; though far less out of desire for personal distinction, than for the substantial value of the knowledge to be attained, and the discipline to be gone through. "I should study," he says, "with the sole view of improving my mind, and fitting myself for the ministry. And how much more necessary is deep piety than knowledge!" But the state of his health, shaken, as has been seen, since the winter he spent in Germany, always retarded, and sometimes quite interrupted his studies. This, however, was no subject of repining with him: on the contrary, he turned it, as he turned everything habitually, into an occasion of thanksgiving. "It is a blessing," he writes, "that God, out of His infinite mercy and goodness, has given me pain. How thankful I ought to be for this! It ought to increase my earnestness in my devotions. I should ever realize it as coming from God through Christ, and thus would it be an earnest of my Saviour's love."

The complaint to which he here alludes, neuralgic pains in the face and head, was accompanied also, at this time, with distressing nervous depression. His friends, who marked his delicate frame, and watched his pale and emaciated countenance, often trembled for his life: and the poor of Herstmonceux, connecting these appearances with the extraordinary and almost unearthly holiness of his character, were unanimously of opinion, that "he was not long for this world." His own family, however, though anxiously careful and watchful over him, were not so much alarmed; and it pleased God to spare him yet for sixteen or seventeen years of eminent usefulness and continued growth in grace. By this time also he had

formed a friendship at Cambridge, which materially lightened the anxiety of his relations. He had made acquaintance with a widow lady residing there with her son, which soon ripened into affectionate intimacy. This friendship will be noticed more at length hereafter. Let it be sufficient to say now, that not only did it ensure a tender and efficient guardianship for his health, but also materially altered the tenor of the last year or two of his University life, bringing much of the atmosphere of home into the experience of Cambridge: an effect which was produced also by association with a larger number of trusted and sympathizing friends; and by intercourse with his cousin Arthur, then resident; with whom, in spite of the great differences of opinion which divided them, he ever lived on terms of affectionate intimacy. By this time also he had begun to visit among the poor at Cambridge—an employment full of delight and refreshment to him. One of his principal College friends, with whom he generally spent his Sunday evenings, in the study of the Greek Testament, the Reverend R. E. Harrisson, then an undergraduate like himself, speaks of the impression produced on his own mind, by a visit to the sick-bed of a dying man, which he paid in company with George Wagner, this being his own first introduction to such a scene. "I was much struck," he says, "with his gentle and affectionate manner. All he said and did made a great impression upon me; and I determined to make his way of dealing with the sick man a model for my own imitation, if ever I should be called to the ministry: and never have I had reason to regret acting upon that determination."

The natural consequence of the ill health he suffered from, was that he was compelled at last to forego the hope of academical honours—in which his success in the College examinations, and his continued proficiency in Mathematics, warranted the expectation that he would attain a place among the Wranglers of his year; and accordingly, in January 1842, he graduated as B.A., with what is called an Ordinary Degree.

Though already old enough now to accomplish the cherished purpose of his heart by taking Orders, he could not but feel that the state of his health made delay desirable and even necessary.

So in the summer of the year he complied with the recommendation of his medical adviser, and went to the Baths of Marienbad in Bohemia. Unhappily, the air of Herstmonceux never agreed with him; and he was seldom able, therefore, to continue many weeks at home.

A few extracts from his letters, written in Germany, at this period, will not be uninteresting; as showing other traits of his mind and character, than those which have been presented almost exclusively as yet.

Marienbad, July 9, 1841.—I sometimes wish I could transport you all, without the fatigue of the journey, to Marienbad. I think you would be delighted with the quietness of the place. In Marienbad itself there is no bustle: in less than five minutes, you may find quiet and retirement by several different paths, which are cut through the dark firs which cover all the hills. Nature here throws fresh charms on Wordsworth's poetry, because the latter shows us how to view her beauties. A great many people are drinking the waters: the arrivals are also constant.... I will now give you a sketch of my life here. I seldom begin

drinking the waters much before six: at present I drink five glasses of the Kreuz-brunn. After this I am obliged to walk an hour, and am afterwards allowed to breakfast. I have not yet begun the baths, but shall do so probably at the end of this week. I now read light books, such as Church History and Schiller, until twelve; when I drink two glasses of the Wald-brunn in my own room. At one o'clock is the table d'hôte, which lasts till nearly two. In the afternoon I generally, if inclined, bury myself in some of the beautiful walks, accompanied by Wordsworth; who, with Schiller, constitute almost the sum of my acquaintances here. At six o'clock, two more glasses of the Kreuz-brunn, and walk an hour after. I think it impossible to study with effect when drinking these waters: and indeed study is interdicted.

Here he had the pleasure soon of falling in with his College Tutor, the Rev. J. W. Blakesley; who, speaking of the time they spent together that summer, complains that "he could not be prevailed upon to shut up his books, and attend solely to his health. I remember he was devoting many hours daily, against my earnest entreaties, to the study of the New Testament, in a critical edition of the original text." Evidently, he had not been able to content himself long with the "light books" specified above.

July 29.—I have full reason to be satisfied with the number of letters I have received since my stay here. Last week they seemed, like the rain, to come in showers—three in the same week. This number quite astonishes some of my German acquaintances; as you may well suppose, when I tell you that one of them gave strict injunctions to his wife not to write more than two letters to him during his course here, lest the effects of the waters might be hindered....J. H. will, I dare say, be amused to hear that I have begun

taking *mud baths*. As I had heard many conflicting accounts of them, it was with a degree of horror that I went to the old bathing-house, and ordered a Schlamm-bad. I was ushered into a room at the appointed hour, which was gloomy and dark; and it seemed as if in the process of equalisation the very caloric given out by the mud-bath was coloured. It required some degree of resolution to get into this mass of mud. When once this was done, it was not disagreeable. On some they have a violent effect, increasing the circulation to such a degree that they are obliged to throw cold water on the head. In consequence, however, of having a very slow circulation, I felt no inconvenience of this sort; and after wallowing in the mire for about twenty-five minutes, I rose in a state unrivalled by Marchant* after one of his most noted eel-expeditions. From this bath I stepped into a hot-water bath, which was placed alongside, and every trace of the mud vanished instantly. The agreeable warmth created by this disagreeable process compensates for the horrors of the first entrance. The mud is very dark and lumpy, and not slimy as in our ponds—it consequently comes off immediately.... I have a good many opportunities of speaking German, and find much greater facility in speaking and reading. The Hanoverian Clergyman, with whom I am now quite intimate, has lent me a very interesting book.... Unfortunately, he leaves the day after to-morrow.

Dresden, August 18.—We reached Prague on Tuesday at eight o'clock. I breakfasted, and got a Lohnbedienter, and hurried off to see some of its beauties. There, with very great historical interest, with which every reader of Schiller's Thirty Years' War must be impressed, is combined a beauty of situation such as I have never before seen in the case of any town.... Both Prague and Dresden are, on the whole, remarkably barren in churches of architectural interest. I saw

* His father's head-gardener.

also the old Jewish synagogue, and had a long conversation in German with the Jew who showed it. He said that it existed before the city of Prague was built. Although this is an exaggeration, it is, I believe, as old as the twelfth century. He also told me, amongst other things, that two tribes and a half are in Europe, and the rest in Africa; in the former are those of Judah and Benjamin, and consequently that the Saviour was expected among the tribes in Europe!... Dresden has certainly a fine situation on the banks of the Elbe. Its galleries are intensely interesting. I quite long sometimes that you were all here, to partake of the pleasure; but I cease to long, when I think that you are all far more useful at Herstmonceux, and doing more for the glory of God. I began on Saturday with going to the Gallery of Antiquities. There are some good statues there, or rather fragments of statues, for most of them have been frightfully maimed and badly restored. From that I went to the Picture Gallery. I shall not attempt here to describe the splendid pictures in it. To find out and examine the best at all carefully, one ought to go eight or ten times: the collection is so immense.

He had not gained much by his visit to Germany. Neither the waters nor the high bleak situation of Marienbad seem to have suited him; and he came back to England little improved in health. But care and quiet proved more efficacious, together with the air of Brighton and Eastbourne, both of which places always agreed with him particularly; and in the summer of 1842, he was thought sufficiently recovered to venture upon Ordination. The curacy of Dallington, a village some seven miles from his Sussex home, fell vacant; and seemed to offer a promising prospect. The Vicar was a permanent absentee: and the Vicarage house, together with the uncontrolled

management of the parish, was assigned over to the Curate by the Bishop, with whom the appointment rested. The population (about 600) was not too large; the place itself healthy and bracing: and the nearness to his family was no small advantage. Accordingly, the offer was accepted: and on the 17th of July, 1842, he was ordained at Gloucester Cathedral, under letters dimissory from the Bishop of Chichester; a day the anniversaries of which he always set apart for special prayer and self-examination.

It was no ordinary offering which was solemnly consecrated to the glory of God, when the young Deacon thus devoted himself, and all the prospects of his life, to the service of the sanctuary. Holiness of character, singleness of aim, and innocency of life, surely seldom paralleled, marked the youthful Minister; nor must we forget the excellent mental and intellectual training that fitted those qualities to exert their full influence upon others. The Spirit of God had sanctified the offering; but let it not be thought a light thing that His Providence had done so much to prepare and to adorn it also. Educated at the first of English Public Schools, and at the greatest of English Colleges; passing through the first with all the ardour of a free-hearted boy, through the other with the holy circumspection of a Christian —introduced to the higher regions of thought and learning by one of the most remarkable men of the age; while, in the lower regions of knowledge, he had added to the usual attainments an intimate acquaintance with two, at least, of the modern languages—surrounded from his infancy with the scenes and occupations which mark the life of an English gentleman; yet early familiarised with an

aspect of society, foreign as well as English, wider than most young men have opened to them, he had been prepared for the work of life by a course of discipline which no merely spiritual development would have supplied. That expansive sympathy with all ranks and conditions of men, which gave him the power of adapting his ministrations to all—that knowledge of the world, which, balanced by Christian principle, enabled him to use as not abusing things which men of narrower prejudices would shrink from as secular and profane —that manly self-appreciation which was strength for action while it was deep humility within—that instruction for the kingdom of heaven which taught him to bring out of his treasures things new and old—these were the results of the process which makes a thoroughly educated man.

Such are the materials which the Church of England possesses preeminently from which to draw her ministers. Oh that the gifts which no education can bestow, may be poured on those who, in other respects, are favoured like George Wagner!

CHAPTER II.

DALLINGTON.

1842—1848.

BETWEEN the chalk precipices of Beachy Head and the sandstone cliffs of Hastings, the coast is flat and featureless; the shelving beach often sinking backwards into marshy levels, and never bounded by anything more elevated than a steep and broken bank. This is the seaboard of the *Weald of Sussex;* a district which, though comparatively narrow here, widens out as it runs inland in a north-westerly direction, till it spreads into that beautiful valley which lies between the South Downs and the corresponding chain of the Surrey hills.

From Pevensey Level, as you look northwards, the Weald of Sussex rises out of the alluvial flats, in a continuous series of nearly parallel ridges,—long, irregular, broken lines of hill, mounting one behind another, tier above tier, till the last and highest joins the lofty upland tract which is called the Forest Ridge—masses of the Wealden clay, traversed by beds of ferruginous sand and marl and limestone, and covered for the most part with corn-fields and hop-grounds; while the pasture lands lying in the deep bottoms between, are

fringed with luxuriant woods, mostly of oak, which straggle up the sides of the hills, and sometimes reach their summits. On the first and lowest of these ridges lies Herstmonceux; on the third, some six or seven miles to the north, stand the Church and village of Dallington.

It is a commanding and beautiful situation. Looking southwards, the eye ranges over the lower ridges of the Weald, and the deep wooded hollows which separate them; while to the west the view is bounded by the noble ranges of the Caburn and Ditchling Beacon Downs, sweeping onwards to Beachy Head—their bold swelling outlines beautifully contrasted with the soft dove-coloured smoothness of their surface, occasionally broken by the white gleaming scars which reveal the nature of their formation. Beyond the Weald again lies the broad expanse of Pevensey Level, sensitively responding to the passing shadows of the clouds, and blackened here and there by the swarms of animal life which people its rich pastures—always a beautiful object at a distance and from a height, whether coloured with a deeper and richer green than the neighbouring country, or *pink* (as it often is in the advanced summer), with the long and withered grasses which ripen and die upon its surface. Above and beyond all, extends the long narrow line of the sea, stretching from Beachy Head to the heights of Hastings and Fairlight, sometimes intensely blue beneath the calm sky bending overhead, or, in gloomy or unsettled weather, reflecting variously the endless variations of light, and cloud, and atmosphere.

The Vicarage of Dallington commands this magnificent prospect. On the other side, a line of lime-trees separates the garden from the

churchyard. The Church is a plain but venerable building, dating in part from the 12th century, somewhat disfigured by ill-executed repairs in brick, and surmounted by a stone spire (one of three only which the diocese contains), visible from many miles off. The village, or street (to use the local expression), straggles northwards over the back of the ridge, till its last houses come in sight of the forest heights of Brightling and Heathfield; the former surmounted by its conspicuous Observatory; the latter marked by the monumental tower, which still reminds the visitor of the Hero of Gibraltar.

Most of the population, which is entirely agricultural, with none above the rank of farmers, are collected in the village; but there are detached houses and cottages, scattered about for a distance of two miles from the Church—outlying portions to be reached by the deep sandy lanes, which plunge down the sides of the ridge, and lead to some lone farmhouse embosomed among oaken copses in the hollows; or to some solitary homestead, which marks a spot, perhaps, where the pasture was first cleared by the brook-side; or where the rustic artisan had erected his furnace in those bygone days, when the bog-iron of the Weald was smelted in the charcoal fires of the forest.

The reader will forgive this long description of the outward aspect of Dallington. Its scenes live brightly in the memory of George Wagner's friends, and help to recal those inward images of peace, and purity, and holiness, which consecrate it in their hearts.

He himself was far from being insensible to the outward charms of his new home. The beauty as well as the healthiness of the situation (for its

bracing air revived and restrung him) was a perpetual source of refreshment and pleasure. But it need hardly be said, that for him the charms of Dallington, as well as its abiding interest, were mainly of a far different nature. It was lovely in his eyes, for the sake of the human souls which were committed to his charge, and over whom he watched with tender love and sympathy—for the sake of the work which had there its appointed field, and in which, consequently, there, more than elsewhere, he might hope for the especial blessing and presence of his Master.

The parishioners were struck with the clear indication of this feeling on his part even before he came into residence. "The Vicarage-house and garden," writes one of them, "were at that time unfit for occupation; consequently, he, with the other members of his family, visited the spot for several weeks, to prepare his home for his reception, ere he finally settled there. That which especially told upon the people was his apparent indifference to the house and garden, and his immediately adopting the whole parish as his garden, and throwing himself at once into his labours. It was at one of these early visits that a poor man was ill in the village. Mr Wagner was in a grocer's shop, making some arrangements for the future with his mother. The moment he heard it, he left the shop, seeming to forget the matter in question; and searched out the man, and ministered to him. I do not relate this as a novelty, or as anything particularly striking in a Christian Minister; but it was in exact harmony with his own character; and the effect upon the minds of his people at the time was electric and most salutary."

On Sunday, July 24, 1842, he first officiated in the Church which had been committed to him: nor were there wanting among his parishioners, at the time, some who perceived at once what manner of pastor had been sent them, and who recognised in this an answer to the prayers which they had earnestly offered up. In entering upon his weekly parochial duties, his first care and thought was, of course, to make acquaintance with his people, visiting them all from house to house; but coincident with this, was the desire and the resolution to establish schools in the parish. A day-school was as yet unknown in Dallington: and even the Sunday-schools "re-established some years before by a most holy and energetic minister of Christ," had fallen to the ground, through the supiness or inefficiency of George Wagner's immediate predecessor. It marked the energy and zeal of the new Curate, that these schools were re-opened on the second or third Sunday of his residence, under the teaching of himself and some members of his family—while, in a sermon specially devoted to the subject, and mainly addressed to the children, he set forth the importance of the work, and invited the co-operation of those who were able and ready to assist him. The same object occupied his mind constantly in his round of visitation. "The parish was canvassed to the very highways and hedges, both for scholars and teachers. The greatest difficulty was in obtaining the latter." But of this presently.

The earnestness and friendly spirit of their new Minister soon began to attract the parishioners. His visits were, for the most part, well received, and soon began to be valued by them; and they were particularly struck with the earnestness with

which he urged them to send for him in case of severe illness, at any hour of the day or night, and in any season of the year. The sincerity of this request was soon tested and proved by an instance which at once became generally known in the parish. A poor woman, the mother of a family, was taken very ill, and became insensible. He came immediately to see her; and longing for an opportunity of speaking to her with effect, charged her family, when he left the cottage, to send for him at any hour of the night, if consciousness returned. She became sensible at an early hour in the morning; and being apprised of this, he instantly got up, and came to her: but she soon relapsed into insensibility. Thinking that she looked uncomfortable from a want of pillows, he ran quickly home, and brought her the pillow from his own bed. Another evening, "as a poor woman was returning home from her work, carrying a pail, and apparently weary, and as Mr Wagner was also returning from his habitual afternoon visits, he took the pail, and carried it a considerable distance for her. This, though little in itself, and still less in the estimation of him who performed it, in no wise lost its reward." It was by little impulsive acts of kindness and benevolence like this, that his character spontaneously revealed itself, and won acceptance for his sacred ministrations. "Another day you might find him at the mill-pond, pulling vigorously at a rope, to get a horse and cart out, which had by some accident fallen in."

Nor was he left long without a seal to his ministry, of a far higher stamp. A young man, an exciseman, living in Dallington, had caught a cold, which settled on his lungs, and ended fatally

after a few weeks' illness. During those weeks George Wagner was continually by his bedside, ministering to his spiritual need, while he did not neglect the wants of the body: and his devoted attentions were fully recompensed. "The young man breathed his last in faith, with a blessing on his minister, who sat by his bedside, holding his hand, and offering the consolation of truth to a spirit to whom God had enabled him to impart a knowledge and appreciation of the work of Christ."

Meanwhile, his pulpit ministrations were winning the attention and engaging the interest of the people. His sermons were plain and simple, easily understood by his hearers, elucidated often and rendered attractive by numerous anecdotes and instructive illustrations: while he earnestly set forth the great truths which were the life and strength of his own soul; and showed by the unmistakeable earnestness of his manner and countenance, that every word came from the heart, and expressed what he himself believed and strove to realise. The sermons were remarkable, too, for their variety of topic, and their strongly practical character. The preacher showed that he well knew the heart, with its evil tendencies and lamentable weaknesses, its disguises, and excuses, and evasions; and well knew also the trials and temptations which beset the daily path of his people. Plain and unreserved in his statements and expressions, he was bold in rebuke, and earnest in warning; while he affectionately comforted and sympathised with the timid, and the sorrowful, and the ignorant; and, centering all consolation and hope in God's revelation of Himself through Christ, yet proceeded to deduce and enforce the minutest details of daily duty, to explain

and recommend the appointed means of grace, and to set forth and illustrate at every turn the harmony, the riches, and the unerring wisdom of the Holy Scriptures. "His frequent visits to the houses of the poor, moreover, led them to go to God's house. They could see he took an interest in their welfare, both for their bodies and their souls;" and the Church was soon attended by such congregations as had not been seen there for years. So the autumn went on; the people learning more and more to understand the character of their Pastor; while, on his part, in the course of two or three months, "every house had been visited, and an entire census taken and entered in his book. Before Christmas (it may be truly asserted) no one, not even the oldest inhabitant, knew so well the families of the poor and their condition as the Rev. George Wagner."

The population of Sussex, at least of those parts of the county, was not a favourable specimen of the English peasantry. Habits of smuggling, though for some time almost wholly laid aside, had left their traces on the character of the people; and it will be remembered that this district was one of the principal seats of the abuses under the old Poor-law. Added to which, a gloomy and fanatical species of Dissent had spread widely over the country, and sunk deeply into the minds of the community. An iron system of Predestinarianism was its basis, issuing often in the wildest conclusions of Antinomianism, and leading almost invariably to a dislike and condemnation of the Church, which amounted, in some cases, to unmingled horror and hatred. Absolute irresponsible power is the fundamental idea of God, on which their system of religion was based; not as an idea

which natural reason teaches, and from the burden and mystery of which the Gospel delivers us; but as one imparted by Revelation, and forming almost its sum and substance. This *is* their Gospel, that men are destined by the Almighty either to salvation or to eternal death. It is for each individual to find out, if he can, to which class he belongs. The stern fanaticism which this fearful doctrine produces, in some cases, may well be imagined. And even among those who adhered to the Church, it was rare to find a thoughtful and a devout mind, whose feelings and opinions were not tinged with the same prevailing colour.

Dallington, perhaps, was not so much affected by these evil influences, either moral or religious, as many other parishes in the neighbourhood. According to some who knew it well, it was favourably distinguished from many of the villages about, and noted for its unity within itself; free, too, from patent vice and open degradation, though sunk (as they confess) in gross ignorance and self-satisfied indifference. At any rate, whatever were the peculiarities of its condition for good or for evil, it was spared that worst of the consequences of Dissent, organised disunion and division. There was no regular Meeting-house in the parish; and therefore there was no permanent centre out of which would spring those lamentable consequences which too generally follow in such a case, however little contemplated at first by the better members of a dissenting community. Those of the inhabitants who separated themselves from the Church (and two or three religious sects had their adherents among them) went to other villages to attend their places of worship, or met in small numbers at the cottage of some one of their body. None

of the farmers had joined any of these bodies, except one, at whose house the Wesleyans met; but he was a devout and sober-minded man; and none supported the authority of the Church Minister more loyally than he did, carrying out the true principles of the body to which he belonged, and regarding it merely as supplementary to the Church at which he was an habitual attendant. The very existence of Dissent at all, save in two or three prominent instances, was owing perhaps to the lamentable want of vitality which had shown itself in the Church.

George Wagner's mode of dealing with the doctrinal errors which we have noticed, was as wise and judicious as it was Christian and charitable. He avoided arguments and discussions; and sought, instead, to sympathise with, and thus to direct more rightly, the strong religious instincts which he recognised in his people. The awful Majesty, the resistless Sovereignty of God, were truths which none felt more deeply than he; the utter helplessness and nothingness of the creature before the All-knowing and All-disposing Creator, was part of his own daily and hourly consciousness: and while meeting perplexed and awestruck minds on this ground, with the sympathy of an experience deeper than their own, he led them gently onwards to the contemplation of the compassion, the tenderness, the unconditional invitations of the Redeemer, without alarming their suspicions, or raising the thought in their mind that his system of doctrine was antagonistic to their own. And thus, as it is well said by one of his parishioners, "while bringing them *directly* to Christ, the Head of the Church, he brought them *indirectly* to the Church also; and one result of

his labours of love was the winning of several families from Dissent." Before his departure from Dallington, almost all the sincere characters in the parish were induced to attend, at any rate, upon the Church ministrations.

But it is time to turn to the subject of the Schools, which (as has been seen) it was his resolution, as well as his desire, to establish without delay. Delay might well have been pardoned, even in one who had been himself Incumbent of the parish, however zealous and active he might be. The want of a building for the purpose, the difficulty of raising funds, and of procuring a suitable master, were obstacles that would have been formidable to any man, and fatal in the estimation of most men; but to him they were difficulties and obstacles which must not be allowed to hinder so good a work. The *funds* he determined to supply himself: as there was no *building*, he would devote a room in his own house to the purpose; and for a *master*, available under his own superintendence, he had not far to look. There was a youth in Herstmonceux parish, of weakly constitution and slight frame, little fitted for hard labour of any kind, whom George's father, Mr Wagner, had benevolently taken in hand for the last year or more, giving him daily instruction in mathematics and other branches of useful learning, in the hope of fitting him for some situation as a schoolmaster or a clerk. This youth was now transferred to Dallington, and placed in charge of the school. He would prove competent for the duty (it was hoped) under the eye, and with the efficient help, of the Minister, of whose household he was now to form a part; while under the same eye, and with the same help, he might devote

his evenings to his own continued improvement. There are few men who would not have shrunk from thus taking his school and his schoolmaster (or, rather, his pupil-teacher, for the schoolmaster's office devolved on *him*) into his own home: but with George Wagner, whatever was useful to others was welcome to himself; and a perpetual call for his own personal exertions and presence seemed to him an additional source of happiness whenever it was also an additional opportunity for doing good. The plan accordingly was put into execution; and two months had scarcely elapsed after his settlement at Dallington, when his Day-school for Boys was opened. The elder boys at first, instead of paying for instruction, had to work in the garden for two hours daily. The experiment proved quite successful. The school work prospered under the vigilant superintendence of the Minister, whose delight it was to look in constantly, to help and cheer both teacher and scholars, even when he was taking no share himself in the instruction; and often might he be seen playing merrily with the boys in his garden, or going round from one to another while engaged in their outdoor occupations, with a word of encouragement or inquiry for each, or a remark which led their thoughts upwards to the subject ever nearest to his own heart.

A few months afterwards, a Girls'-school was opened also; another room in the Vicarage being sacrificed for the purpose, and another member (a young schoolmistress from Brighton) added to his establishment. At this time he was decidedly opposed to mixed schools; an opinion which he afterwards changed, his own judgment having yielded to the results of others' experience, which

he patiently investigated, and by which he was convinced.

The arrangements, just described, did not remain undisturbed for many months; but to this we shall have occasion presently to revert.

It will be remembered that the young schoolmaster entered on his duties with the prospect of help and instruction in his own studies in the evenings. The call thus made upon George Wagner's time suggested to him the thought that there might be other young men in the parish and neighbourhood, who would be glad to receive instruction also; and any such accordingly were invited to attend. The result was a class of two or three besides the schoolmaster, who used to meet at the Vicarage, in the evenings of every alternate week-day, from seven to nine, P.M., to study Mathematics, Latin, and the Holy Scriptures. One young man walked a distance of eight miles every week for this purpose. Two at least of this class became schoolmasters afterwards. "What moved these pupils to gratitude perhaps more than anything else," is the testimony of one of them, "was the sacredness with which he regarded and observed all these engagements. Although teaching them gratuitously, he was as punctual, and manifested disappointment, if prevented from meeting them, as much as one could do, whose obligations or interest might be at stake."

It has been observed, when speaking of the Sunday-school, that greater difficulty was experienced in finding teachers than pupils. But teachers were not long in offering themselves, induced to come forward by the expression of his desire to find them; and prepared, when thus found, for a

right discharge of their duties, by his personal influence and instruction. One of these was a remarkable instance of the happy and blessed effect which is often produced on the heart by the desire and the effort to do good to others. His case is thus described by George Wagner himself, in a sermon preached many years afterwards at Brighton, on the subject of Sunday schools:—

We cannot speak of the spirit of a Sunday-school teacher without thinking of one whom we can never forget, and in whom it was beautifully exemplified. He was a young man, who had had no such education as those whom I am addressing have had. His days were passed in a shop. When first asked to teach in the Sunday-school which we were then forming in a small country parish, he assented, but without much apparent zeal and earnestness. But it was not long before God kindled in his soul a spirit of fervent love and zeal. Though employed until twelve o'clock on Saturday night, he sat up afterwards to prepare the lessons for his class; such was his diligence and sense of responsibility. And truly touching and edifying was it to hear him in his class. His very soul seemed to go forth in every word. One day, a day never to be forgotten by me, I met him in my way to a cottage, and spoke to him about his class. A word on that subject was enough to enter into his soul. He seemed at once to forget that any one but God was present; and said, as if all alone with Him, "Precious, precious souls!" He sowed, I cannot doubt, with tears. But he was allowed to sow a very short time. In less than three months his soul was with Jesus. Never have I seen such growth in grace in so short a time, and not often a more peaceful death. Oh may the Spirit, who taught him to sow in so beautiful a temper, teach us likewise, that, whilst watering others, we may be watered abundantly ourselves!

It need hardly be said that this young man's deathbed was assiduously watched, and affectionately cheered, by his faithful Pastor; but it must be added that, in consequence of his illness, he had been previously removed to his own home, to the care of his family, at some eight or nine miles' distance, whither George Wagner had to walk, in order to attend him.

Such was the spirit which the influence and example of the Minister aroused in the teachers who assisted him. They met weekly at the Vicarage for instruction and prayer, the young men on Sunday evenings, the women on the evenings of a week-day.

A further evening (and this must nearly have exhausted the week) was devoted, whenever the season of year admitted of the assemblage, to a Lecture, or Bible Class; which he held at first in the school-room of the Vicarage, but afterwards (when the numbers increased), in his drawing-room.

In short, it was his desire and aim to use every available hour, and every available method, for the edification of his people, at whatever cost of trouble or loss of privacy to himself. His industry and untiring energy astonished all who witnessed (as few could witness) the full extent of his daily work. "I used to think," said a College friend of his to a neighbouring Clergyman, intimate with both parties, to whose house he returned after a visit to Dallington, "I thought before that *you* worked very hard in your parish; but I see now that it is nothing to what George Wagner does."

The reader will perhaps have forgotten by this time, that this active Minister was a man of weak

and suffering health. Such labours seem incredible, except in one of strong frame and unbroken bodily vigour. But the fact is, nevertheless, that this work was carried on amidst, and in spite of, much constitutional infirmity and frequent attacks of pain. Though the air of Dallington suited him well, and he was decidedly improved in health since he had taken up his residence there, he was still sadly unequal to much physical exertion; and hardly ever, for a day together, was free from suffering. Like Baxter, to whom in several points of mind and character also he bore no inconsiderable resemblance, he got through labours which most strong men would find impossible to them, under all the disadvantages of a weak frame, and a nervous system that was soon exhausted. And in both cases the secret source of strength must be sought for within; yet not so much in that indomitable force of will, which in some men overbears pain and infirmity and the reluctance of shrinking nature, as in that quiet, composed, and happy temper of mind which is the fruit of godly self-discipline. George Wagner had not refused "to bear the yoke in his youth," and now "the yoke was easy and the burden was light." He had given himself up unreservedly to learn of Him "who is meek and lowly of heart," and, according to the unfailing promise, he had "found rest to his soul." Hence he had none of the wearing struggles of a divided heart, and little, too, of anxiety and perplexity in the outward things of life. His ministry, like his whole daily walk, was eminently one of prayer. Prayer was the atmosphere in which he breathed and lived; in which his sermons were composed, his plans formed and undertaken, his whole intercourse with others con-

ducted. And, therefore, there was a consistency, an elevation, and a calmness about him, which supplied repose in labour, and peace in the midst of conflict. He cast his burden on the Lord; he did not vex himself with issues of events which belonged not to him to order; even in his ministerial duties, under difficulty, disappointment, mortification, he silently lifted up his heart in prayer, and referred the matter wholly to a Wisdom and Power higher than his own: and thus, with a lightened heart, he turned again to the work which was before him. And that work, for the most part, was a positive refreshment and happiness to him. It was the delightful exercise of his highest faculties on their proper end and object. His growing conformity to his Redeemer ever showed itself in this: it was his meat and drink "to do the will of Him that sent him, and to finish His work." Nor yet were sober and prudent considerations forgotten, in the daily management of his time and strength. He was punctual, regular, and careful; and knowing the limit of his bodily powers, seldom ventured to overtask them, unless some extraordinary emergency made him feel that all must give way to a higher duty. The routine of the day was as follows:—Family worship was at eight: and was attended generally by two or three of the elder parishioners, living near the Vicarage. To this little congregation George Wagner used at first to expound, as well as read, a portion of the Bible; but afterwards he gave up the plan, finding that it cost him too much exertion. Two hours before this he had risen, reserving that time for prayer and devotional reading. After breakfast, which followed family worship, he went for an hour into his

schools, giving a regular lesson to one or more of the classes. From ten to twelve he wrote his sermons, or studied (and during the first year of his residence he devoted considerable time to reading for Priest's Orders), looking in sometimes upon the schools as occasion offered. At twelve he went out into the garden, sometimes occupying himself with the children, or more frequently with the teachers; to whom he would give instruction *vivâ voce* for half-an-hour, as he walked about with them: after which he retired to his room. At one o'clock he dined; and afterwards read some book of general interest, or a newspaper, and wrote letters. Then he went out into the parish for his afternoon rounds, the regular time for which was from three to six. After tea, he occupied his evenings in the various ways which have been described. At nine, he took a slight supper, and had family prayer; after which he never read any book but the Bible, on which he meditated till eleven; at which hour he went up to his bedroom.

For several months after he had settled at Dallington, he enjoyed the society and supervision of his family. Either his mother, or one of his sisters, was constantly with him, to manage his household affairs, to take care of his health, and to aid him in the parish; and sometimes nearly the whole party would stay with him for a while. But in the spring of 1843 these advantages were lost to him. Herstmonceux Place had been let to Chevalier Bunsen; and Mr Wagner and his family had resolved to go abroad on the Continent. Their resolution, however, would probably have been shaken, through the fear of leaving George alone, had not an admirable substitute been found, to

fill their place in their absence. Something has been said of this lady before, when we were engaged with the subject of Cambridge; but her remarkable history and character call for a longer notice.

She was born at Lisbon, of German Protestant parents resident there; and had passed her girlhood and early youth amidst the exciting scenes of the Peninsular War. Her family and friends were enthusiastic supporters of the national party, and hearty admirers of England and the English; and she was early introduced to the society which included our officers and diplomatists congregated at the Portuguese capital, with some of whom she continued on terms of intimate friendship to the end of her life. Singularly beautiful in person and graceful in manners, she attracted great admiration; and ended by marrying a young English merchant of considerable wealth, whom business had brought temporarily to Lisbon. A few years of married life were granted her in England, surrounded with every accessory of comfort; when suddenly she was left a widow, and soon afterwards discovered also that she was all but penniless. Under such circumstances, it was hard to resist the offers and entreaties of her own relations, to make her home with them, either in Portugal or in Germany; entreaties backed by promises of an advantageous settlement for her son, her only child. But she resolved that, come what might, she would not deprive her boy of his birthright as an Englishman; and committing herself to the God of the fatherless and the widow, she collected what little means she had, to raise a scanty income; and settled in a town, the seat of one of our Public Schools, where she determined

to educate her son. By strict economy and skilful management, aided by admirable hopefulness and helpfulness, she effected her purpose; and having accomplished her task so far, she removed with him to Cambridge. Wherever she went, the sweetness and simplicity and dignity of her character won for her the respect and affection of many sincere friends; and she threw herself heartily into the society of her son's schoolfellows and fellow-collegians, partly from her own sympathy with the cheerfulness of youth, partly from the wish to share and to direct the friendships he should form.

It was for the purpose of being near one of these friends, then Curate of Herstmonceux, that in the summer of 1840 she took lodgings in that village, and spent several weeks there with her son. The warm hospitality of the Wagner family soon found her out; and among the rest she made acquaintance with George, then at home for the vacation. On the return of both parties to Cambridge, this acquaintance soon ripened into a close intimacy. For some years past the trustful piety of Mrs N. had been assuming more and more a definitely Christian form; and she was now strongly attracted by the holiness and purity of her young friend's character. He soon became her most trusted spiritual counsellor; while he, on his part, leaned with almost filial confidence on her watchful and tender friendship. When, therefore, his family went abroad in 1843, it seemed both to him and to them a most desirable arrangement, that she should take their place for a while at Dallington; and, as her son's Cambridge course was just completed, and he was now independent of her help, she consented, after some hesitation, to the proposal.

This arrangement lasted far longer than any of the parties had anticipated. A painful and deplorable accident, that befel Mr Wagner in the summer of 1845, detained the family abroad; and for three years Mrs N. made her home at the Vicarage of Dallington. She directed the household, watched over and sustained the health of her friend, and aided him heartily in all his parish ministrations.

How much the presence of some such friend was needed, may be seen from the following testimony of a Clergyman in the neighbourhood:— "Often when living at Dallington alone, he would return home to his evening meal exhausted, and yet not take the food which his housekeeper had prepared for him, but say to her, 'Such a person is ill, and coming for nourishment; give them this:' and so give away all his meal, and go without himself. His favourite housekeeper, Ann Barnes, who died in his service, told me this, with many lamentations for the consequences of a Christian unselfishness, which yet she honoured."

When Mrs N. gave up her charge to his family on their return, she retained a room in the village. And when he moved to Brighton, there she followed also; taking up her abode within a short distance from his lodgings, and continuing to enjoy his ministry, and almost daily his society. In the lingering illness of her last years, he was her principal comforter; and though separated at the end, by his removal from Brighton and from England, the separation was not long. She died only a few months before him, supported to the last by the power of that faith of which he, under God, had been so eminently the helper and confirmer.

So much of what has been already detailed of

George Wagner's ministrations applies to the whole course of his life at Dallington, that the remainder of the period may be more briefly sketched. Take, for instance, the history of his schools. It has been said that the arrangements, described above, did not remain very long uninterrupted. In about nine months the schoolmistress left him; and for some time the school, which she had presided over, fell to the ground. The young schoolmaster also (William Honisett) was attacked with consumption, of which not long afterwards he died, having previously been removed to his home at Herstmonceux. His place was taken by a younger brother, who had already shared in his turn the benefit of the elder Mr Wagner's instructions; and as he was very young at the time, a good deal of additional labour and anxiety in the management of the school devolved upon the Minister. Some two years after, it was judged best, for the youth's own sake, to send him to a training institution; after passing through which, he took a permanent situation elsewhere; and in his place, the Boys' School at Dallington was committed to the charge of one who had long been a teacher at the Sunday-school, and a member of the evening class for study, and who, besides instructing the children in singing (which he had done for some time before), had lately acted as an assistant in the Day-school. This young man continued to superintend it as long as George Wagner himself remained in possession of his cure.

Meanwhile, as the difficulty of procuring a mistress was a daily grief to the zealous Pastor, Mrs N., imitating the self-devotion of her friend, resolved on re-opening it and conducting it her-

self; which accordingly, in spite of his remonstrances and with his unwilling consent, she did for nearly two years, aided by the daughter of a small farmer, a member of his flock, in whom George Wagner took a deep interest, and who in turn regarded him with peculiar veneration and gratitude. After this course of preparation, aided by definite instruction besides, the young person just mentioned was judged fit to undertake the management of the school; which accordingly she did, and retained her post until the wife of the schoolmaster, recently married, was installed in her place; and she herself was appointed to the superintendence of a *third* school, one for infants, which George Wagner now felt himself able to establish. Thus, by his own exertions, from his own resources, and with teachers raised and trained by himself, had this devoted Minister succeeded in providing a complete educational establishment for the children of his parish.

The population of Dallington was about 600; and, as the three schools together contained upwards of 100 children, a very large proportion of the young were under instruction. It was remarked by several visitors from neighbouring parishes, that it was a rare thing to meet a child in the village or the road during school-hours.

The share he took himself, in the instruction of the children, has been already noticed. His influence over them was very great, as was also the interest he succeeded in imparting to their lessons. "Whenever it happened that he could not come and hear us," writes one of his former scholars, "we have felt the day go off dull and heavy." "Whether there was anything peculiar in his teaching," says the schoolmaster, "or whe-

ther it was that his whole character shed such a halo of interest on the class, it is not easy to determine. It was an opinion which he always maintained, that much mechanical work should be done by the children themselves in a lesson. Enlist their sympathies, he said, and assist them in gleaning knowledge for themselves, by questions suggestive of thoughts and reflections. To teach, and to examine a class would be totally different things with him. To examine it, would be simply testing, as it were, the powers of the machinery. To teach it, would be to set this machinery in motion, and regulate it, as well as (when needful) to repair and improve it."

All who ever saw this school at work, must have been struck with the quiet orderliness and industry pervading it. "There was a peculiar neatness and precision always prevailing there," writes his neighbour, the Rev. J. R. Munn, of Ashburnham, "even down to the sharpening of the slate pencils. As to his teaching, the children seemed to hang upon his lips for his words as they fell: so deeply did he interest them by his manner. I can *now* distinguish several of his schoolboys since grown up, by their manner and bearing."

During the later years of his residence, all the schools were held in houses procured for the purpose in the village; the rooms in the Vicarage being wanted in the summer time, for the use of his own family on their return from abroad. His Boys' school-room, the largest of the three, was formed by removing the partition wall between the kitchens of two contiguous cottages, which he rented for the purpose. Under his excellent successor at Dallington, suitable School-rooms were built; the foundation-stone of which, in the

unavoidable absence of the new Vicar, was laid by George Wagner himself, in July, 1849.

With regard to the Church services little remains to be told. He had, from the beginning of his ministry, added a sermon to the morning service (which had been omitted before); and it was his usual practice then to preach extempore, often addressing himself especially to the children; for at Dallington, as in most rural parishes, the adult population could not be induced to attend Divine worship at that time of day, except in small numbers. In the afternoon, the church was usually crowded; and he almost always preached a written sermon, judging that the more careful preparation thus bestowed upon it would render it, or ought to render it, more effective. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered five or six times a year, some convenient day being fixed by the Minister in the intervals between the great Church festivals. He would often speak to his people on this subject, explaining to them the nature of the Sacrament, and urging them to attendance; but with little effect. The names of those who came on each occasion were entered in a book, which he kept for the purpose, with remarks upon the attendance, thankful notices of new communicants, and explanations of the absence of some who stayed away. The largest number recorded in the book is only thirty-two; but even that, small as it is, was a considerable increase over the earlier entries, and included a large proportion of new communicants. Still the smallness of the number greatly discouraged and distressed him: and when even this fell short, he closes the day's record with intercessory prayer, "Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth."

"On his first entrance upon his Curacy he changed the time of administration of Baptism, from after Divine service, to the time prescribed in the Rubric. By this act he gave offence to many at the time (one man even rose from his place and left the church, on the first occasion of its performance); but his gentle way brought nearly all round to him on this point in the end." This subject of Baptism was one (as might be expected) on which the minds of many of his people were very much perplexed. He often preached about it; explaining his own views, and pointing out the way in which he believed the formularies of the Church might be reconciled with the words of Scripture. But though in some measure successful, he found that, together with more definite views on the subject, there grew up a greater unwillingness to undertake the solemn responsibility of sponsors. This feeling seems to have given him much trouble. It was his practice, before the Baptism of a child, to offer his counsel to the parents, as to whom they should select for the office: and he would often use his influence, in persuading and encouraging those who were thus selected to undertake the charge.

His system of preparing candidates for Confirmation, as it was almost the same as that which he pursued at Brighton, shall be detailed once for all in that portion of the Memoir.

It may be mentioned here, that at all funerals, when he was permitted to do so, he would read a passage of Scripture and offer a prayer with the assembled mourners before the corpse left the house.

The occasional services in his Church were rare; though towards the end of his residence

he transferred thither some of the ministrations, which he had at first carried on in his own house. In winter he had an evening service with a Lecture, on the Wednesday: but, foreseeing the dangers which might arise out of attendance, or supposed attendance at it, he went round the Parish, warning parents and heads of families not to allow their young people to come, unless properly accompanied. He marked the season of Lent, from the beginning, with an evening service and Lecture on the Wednesdays, repeating this *every* day in Passion Week. During the rest of the year, and at different periods of his ministry, his practice varied. Sometimes (as has been said) he collected the more devout of his parishioners at his own house on a week-day evening, for prayer and instruction. Sometimes he would hold Cottage Lectures, at different parts of the parish, taking them in rotation. "One plan which he adopted," writes Mr Munn, "and in which for some time he took a deep interest, gave him an insight into the character of many, which he would not otherwise have obtained. It was this. He desired any of his adult pupils, or parishioners, to leave with him, on a certain evening of the week, written on paper, any text or expression of Holy Scripture, which they did not understand, or of which they desired some explanation. On a later day of the week he met these applicants; and having prepared himself to answer and explain their written inquiries, he did so. For some time this work interested him exceedingly; and he told me (how well I remember his sweet smile as he said it!) that, though sometimes their questions were puzzling to him, as well as quaint, yet he found many making inquiries most seriously,

and many whose distressing notions and difficulties had been removed and cleared away. However, he gave up this plan eventually, finding that it took up a great deal of valuable time; but chiefly, he told me, because he found some persons disposed to put perplexing and paradoxical questions to him, to lead him into a dilemma, and with no desire for information. So he desisted."

Discussion, approaching to a controversial character, with the extreme Dissenters was, of course, sometimes forced upon him; though he avoided it if possible. "With the high Calvinists," remarks the same informant, "he would, as occasion came, have conversations. I have frequently consulted him about them, being distressed at the notions of some of my own people, and hoping to learn a right way in dealing with them from him. I remember his lamenting to me, that he always found both conversation and discussion with them vain; and that he could not alter their views, which were generally avowed doggedly, and supported by some isolated or partial text from Scripture. Once he thought he had moved a man; but to his surprise he ended the talk thus:—"Ah, Mr Waggoner," (so they called him,) "but how do you answer this, *Their strength is to sit still?*"

In his visits of inspection, and friendly intercourse with his flock, it was his theory and intention to go round the parish in the course of every six weeks; and though this intention can hardly have been entirely fulfilled, yet he was not a man to maintain a theory inconsistent with his practice. Probably, a very slight visit sufficed him, if he had no particular object, or found no particular opening, at the cottage where he called. It was characteristic of his delicate attention to

the circumstances of others, that he would not pay such visits on a Saturday afternoon, because he would not hinder the mothers of families from finishing their preparation for the Sunday. To his own convenience he paid little regard. "No distance kept him away from any of his flock," writes one of them; "no weather kept him back, from any who were ill, or in distress. I have been pained to see him out, when the rain poured down in torrents, or the snow was almost blinding. It mattered not to him. Every soul under his charge was precious; and he knew that to win one would be to add a fresh jewel to his Saviour's crown."

Still, in the arrangement of these visits, he was guided very much by a discriminating regard to circumstances. "I remember remarking," (observes the Clergyman quoted above,) "one peculiar feature of his manner of visiting. I mean his perseverance with an individual. He would sometimes visit the same person or family almost daily, when he found there some latent or nascent desire for instruction, or a heart touched. He wished to strike while the iron was hot. And this habit, I think, was blessed with much success in his visits. It was really with him, '*Line upon line, and precept upon precept.*' Thus, his constant earnestness deeply impressed the person he visited. Nor would he ever lose sight of a parishioner in whose heart he thought he had sown the seeds of eternal life, if he or she had left Dallington even for a distant parish. I have known him periodically go and visit them, as an old friend; and thus endeavour to keep up the work he had begun."

But his most solicitous attentions were bestowed upon the sick. In dangerous or critical cases his visits were daily, and sometimes more

frequent than that; and his tender and delicate sympathy, his own deep humility, and the firm hold he had through faith and love on the blessed doctrines which he preached, made his very presence a light and comfort in the sick room of the suffering and the dying. No one knew better also how to blend the ministration of the body with that of the soul; and some cases occurred which tested this to the utmost. "In December, 1845," writes one whose words have been often quoted before, "a poor family was laid down with a bad infectious fever. No one went near them, to do anything for them; and they were in very great distress. I went sometimes to see the child. As Mr Wagner and Mrs N. were away, there was no one to go and read to them. The house in which they lived was a miserable place, so dirty and so wretched, I have never seen the like; the child lying on the floor, and the mother and infant in one miserable bed. As soon as Mr Wagner came home, he might be found every day in this poor miserable abode, notwithstanding the raging fever, ministering to their wants, both of body and soul. One morning I went up to the Vicarage as usual, about half-past eight; and I was so astonished to find him in the back kitchen, cleaning his own boots. The night before, he had been walking far in the wet and dirt; for where many of the poor lived, the roads were so very bad, that it was difficult to get through them in the winter. I went up to him, and asked him to let me do it for him. 'No,' said he, 'I must go directly to see that poor family with the fever; for the doctor said that if they were moved they might get better.' Then he tried every possible means to get them a place in an out-building of some of the farms; but with-

out success. Then he came to us, and requested us to let them come into the Oast-house.* This was a poor place; but no other could be got; and I remember how delighted he was when my father gave consent. At the same time he told me, that I must not go and see them, lest I should take the fever. 'As for me,' he said, 'I must go: it is my duty.'" The poor woman and the two children died, however, before they could be moved.

So bright an example of Christian holiness could hardly fail to attract many by its light; and as time went on, George Wagner's influence among his parishioners grew, and also (which alone he cared for) their attention to those truths which were all in all to him. "His character and influence," says one of them, "were more felt than can be described. There was a secret and hidden power at work in the parish, which took some time to develop itself." It might be traced in the moral improvement of many families; and showed itself also in those higher fruits which, though sometimes counterfeited, are, and ought to be, far more precious still in the eyes of the Minister of God. A few anecdotes, showing the success of his ministry, may be selected among many that might be adduced. A young man, residing in Kent, came to pay a visit to his relations in Dallington; and going with them to church, heard there two sermons, with which he was so much impressed, that this day proved the turning point of his life. On his return home, he soon became a Sunday-school teacher; grew rapidly in Christian knowledge and consistency; and though a labouring man himself, was active in his leisure hours in visiting and reading to the sick. Five or six years

* Hop-kiln.

afterwards, in one of these visits he caught an infectious fever; of which he died in great suffering, but supported by a sure faith in his Saviour. He often spoke with gratitude of Mr Wagner; and once made a pilgrimage to Dallington on purpose to hear him again, in which hope however he was unfortunately disappointed. Through his entreaties, his mother also was induced to visit her relations in Sussex; and, having taken up her abode with them, was impressed as she had never been before, under the influence of the same ministry, and became one of the Communicants. A sister, also, of the same young man, visiting the place, was confirmed and advanced in her Christian character in a very marked manner. Some few months afterwards she died.

About the middle of the time of his residence, a young man in the parish, being taken very ill, sent in great distress for George Wagner, who visited him constantly till his death. He was a schoolmaster, living at a distance, but staying then with his parents for a holiday. Though his character had been moral and upright, he was suffering from a crushing sense of sin, and sorely needing the help of a spiritually-minded Minister. These visits were very much blessed; and he died in peace. One morning as his Minister entered the room, he looked up brightly with the exclamation, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." This was the first expression of a faith and hope which was tested afterwards amidst the pains and terrors of death.

On one occasion a poor woman in the parish, harassed by the troubles of life, attempted to destroy herself by taking poison. Her husband was a very ungodly man, and she very passionate.

As soon as it was discovered what she had done, the Clergyman was immediately sent for. The remedies, which by medical aid were applied, were happily successful. George Wagner went every day to see her, while she was ill; and tried every possible way to bring her to a sense of her sin, not (as it is hoped) without success. The husband, too, became much more sober and steady; and after this attended church with his wife. On the Sunday before this occurrence, George Wagner had preached on that text in Proverbs, (iii. 33,) "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but He blesseth the habitation of the just." Nor did he fail on the following Sunday to dwell on the confirmation which the week had supplied to this declaration of God's word.

But while thus George Wagner's message and example were "made a savour of life unto life" to some of his flock, he was not left without the awful experience of the opposite effect, and sometimes in a form peculiarly trying to one of such tenderness of feeling. An instance is mentioned of a man who would not receive his visits; but assailed him when he came, with abuse. "But he bore it so meekly! although he must have felt it; counting it an honour to suffer shame for Christ. He persisted in his attempts to visit this man in his illness, till he positively forbade him. And then he would come to a neighbouring house, and meet the wife of this poor man, that he might pray with her, and for her husband. Who can tell what these prayers did, even for him?" They were largely blessed at any rate to the wife, who became an altered person. "In his intercourse with his parishioners," says the Clergyman before quoted, "he never flinched from gentle, but firm

rebuke, whenever he heard of vice. Once he told me how he had spoken to a young man on his manner of life, and that he had laughed at him to his face, while speaking to him. This wretched young man lived on a reckless life; and died miserable in spirit, and suffering in body, some years ago. Once, when he had been annoyed by some feeling of want of appreciation of the Gospel in his parish, and was mentioning it to me, it led to a conversation as to the extent of self-sacrifice required in a Minister with no sign of success. I shall never forget his solemn declaration, that if, after devoting himself, and doing all he could to spread the knowledge of Jesus Christ in his parish, he found that he was doing no good, and the people would *not* receive it—he felt it would be right to leave, and try elsewhere. Wherever he went, in his parish or in society, he was one whose light shined and glorified his Heavenly Father, and often led others to do the same."

His letters from Dallington show how sadly and with what deep self-abasement his mind often dwelt on the dark side of the picture presented by his parish life, mourning over the state of his flock, yet ever recurring to the thought of his own unworthiness as sufficient to account for all. "It often seems to me impossible that God can bless such a ministry as mine." His principal confidant in these matters was his old Cambridge friend, the Rev. R. E. Harrisson; who had been ordained a year before him, and with whom he kept up a constant correspondence, more especially on subjects connected with the ministry, suggesting and asking for practical hints, inviting associated prayer, and pointing to such examples as that of M'Cheyne, who beyond all others seems

to have won his admiration and reverence. One extract from these numerous letters seems peculiarly worthy of preservation.

I purpose, through God's assistance, to *prepare* more diligently for visiting my flock. It certainly seems remarkable that, whilst we think much on the matter and manner of our sermons, we study so little how to make our *visits* most profitable. And yet how great a work it is to convince a soul of sin! through the help of the Spirit, to find out and beat down all refuges of lies! How great a work through the same Spirit to cause the heart of the presumptuous sinner to tremble, and the heart of the trembling sinner to rejoice! How difficult to apply with wisdom all the varied wealth of our treasury to the comforting of the afflicted, and to the binding up of the broken-hearted! There are, as you know, many other cases besides these. What need, then, that we know how to divide the word of truth! I shall be glad of any hints from you on this subject.

Sometimes he poured forth his heart in the pulpit; mourning over the small success of his ministry. Every July, when the anniversary came round of his first entrance on his parochial charge, it was his custom to preach a sermon upon the nature, the purpose, the duties, the responsibilities, or the authority of the Christian ministry; recalling the thoughts of his people and himself to the relation which subsisted between them, and urgently pressing home the question, What results had arisen from it?

One of the means by which he strove to arouse his people from the lethargy of a merely nominal Christianity, was by bringing Missionary operations before their minds, and leading them to make some self-denying efforts themselves to aid

the Missionary cause. Beginning here, as in many other things, with the children, he succeeded in raising much interest on the subject in the parish: and held quarterly, and even monthly, meetings at his house; with an annual one, well attended, in his cottage school-room. For these meetings he procured the assistance of several of the neighbouring Clergy; above all, of the Reverend Owen Vidal, afterwards Bishop of Sierra Leone, then incumbent of a recently constituted district on the Dicker Common, not many miles from Dallington. He, of all the Clergy of the surrounding district, was, perhaps, the one who bore the greatest resemblance to George Wagner himself. Archdeacon Hare, who took the deepest interest in his Clergy, especially in the younger men, whom he loved to aid by sympathy and encouragement, used often to couple the two together, and observe, with affectionate enthusiasm, that "he did not think any Archdeaconry in England could show two holier and more devoted young Ministers than dear Vidal and dear George." A Missionary Meeting in a neighbouring Parish was the surest occasion for tempting George Wagner out of his own. He was always ready to attend it, if possible; and always, if he came, to speak. Otherwise, it was hard to draw him from his home. At Herstmonceux, where, in three or four houses, besides the Rectory, he was always a most welcome visitor, he seldom appeared; unless it were for two or three hours in the middle of the day, at times when he felt he needed change and refreshment. There, in the house which had been the home of his youth, the Chevalier Bunsen and his family were for some time domiciled; but, though he much prized and enjoyed their society, he sel-

dom allowed himself to partake of it; and he observed the same rule with his neighbours elsewhere. At the Monthly Meetings of the Clerical Society he was often, if not usually, present; though his deafness hindered him from hearing much that took place. He made few observations himself; but what he did say was always listened to with respect, and always deserved the reception it met with.

Little or nothing has been said as yet about his management of the secular affairs of the parish. Being himself only the Curate in charge, it was no part of his necessary duty to attend the Vestries and Parish Meetings; and he did not do so, unless when requested, which was sometimes the case. He was much shocked, however, with the practice which he found established, of meeting on such occasions in the Chancel of the Church, and even within the Communion Rails. Nor would he rest till this irreverent custom was altered to a better one. Most of the incidental business, and all the charities, devolved on him; yet, as there was nothing complicated or unusual to notice in either, this need not detain us long. There were no gentry, as has been seen, resident in Dallington: and the farmers were not in circumstances to give much away. The chief proprietors in the parish were two great landowners of the neighbourhood, especially a nobleman resident at no great distance. And both as almoner to them, and to his father, and as dispenser of his own liberal contributions, George Wagner controlled all the funds for charitable purposes. He had a Clothing Club, and a Shoe Club for the School-children; and in the winter he opened a Soup-kitchen. In all these matters, his friend Mrs N.

was of the greatest service to him. She found, on her arrival, that he was somewhat wanting in method with regard to these things: but, under her superintendence, "the Parish Cupboard" soon became a perfect model. A separate bag for each of the charitable funds, for each of the Schools, for the Missionary Association, &c., hung upon its own nail; and within, besides the money which belonged to each particular object, was deposited the account-book, which duly recorded the receipts and the expenditure. In the assistance he would render to the poor, he was always disposed to go to the utmost extent of, and even beyond, his ability; and, indeed, they often sorely needed his assistance, in what might truly be called "their deep poverty." In the years 1845, 1847, and 1848, especially, much distress prevailed; and his tender sympathy for them, and his concern for the anxiety in which the farmers also shared, were expressed freely from his pulpit. "Yet, with all his generous unselfishness, he was not a careless giver. He made it a principle of action with himself to discriminate and inquire, to weigh matters and characters. Sometimes he was imposed on, as all are; but with far less frequency than men, of his devoted views and unselfish nature, are often taken in by hypocrisy and cunning."

Nor must it be supposed that his charities cost him nothing, and that he had but to draw as he pleased upon the purse of a generous father. His allowance was a fixed one; fixed by his own desire at a very moderate sum, and stedfastly adhered to on his part. Including his Curate's stipend, his income was less than what is usually considered necessary for the annual expenses of a Pensioner at Trinity College, Cambridge; less than he him-

self had been accustomed to in that position. And with this income, while his family were absent on the Continent, he contrived to effect all that has been described; a surprising result, it must be confessed, even with so skilful an economist as had been, happily, secured him, to control his household expenses; and one which was not attained without minute and watchful self-denial.

During the residence of his family on the Continent, he joined them for a few weeks on two several occasions. One was a visit of unmingled pleasure and brightness, to the Bagni di Lucca, in the summer of 1844: in which, after suffering at first from the severe heat, he threw himself with keen delight into the enjoyment of the beauties of the Italian scenery. Besides the happiness of rejoining his family, he had the pleasure also of contracting here some new Christian friendships; especially with the late Sir Alexander Carmichael, a young man like-minded with himself, whose early death was deeply and widely deplored. The other, in 1845, was a call of melancholy duty, on the occasion which has been alluded to before. His father had met with a frightful accident, by the overturn of the carriage in the Tyrolese Bavaria; and lay, with his leg dreadfully shattered, at a miserable little village inn on the borders of the Tegern See. The presence of such a son must have been a comfort indeed; and he, on his part, was cheered by the lesson of fortitude and patience which none can teach so well or so acceptably as a parent. "He was much struck by the wild uncivilised character of the country people; who, from Mass at the village church, flocked to the inn, and passed the day in noisy revelry, most painful to those engaged in nursing.

He had not yet the taste for Botany and Geology, which gave such interest to his later excursions, and would have added to his enjoyment of the beautifully wooded mountains and hills at Tegern See. In the intervals, when not with his father, he made the acquaintance of Dr Forster and his wife, who was the daughter of the famous Jean Paul Richter; and of the Countess Pappenheim, a lady of superior ability and excellence, who had a villa in the neighbourhood." It was not till the summer of 1846 that his family returned to England, after an absence of more than three years. A few extracts from his letters, written to them from Dallington, during this interval, will be read with interest, as filling up the picture of his parish life and labours.

TO MISS E. WAGNER.

Dallington, July 25, 1843.

I have now been long silent; but it has been intentional, as there were so many letters waiting for you at Geneva. It seemed better to pause for a time, that my news might not be *veraltet* before it meets your eye. You will all, I am sure, be delighted to hear that Vaughan* has been staying some days with us. He was more delightful than ever; cheerful and full of Christian feeling. Since he left us he has been to Paris with Arthur Stanley, whom he persuaded to accompany him the day after the latter arrived at Herstmonceux. . . . I have had many sad cases in this parish. . . . Yesterday, another painful case came to my knowledge. "Nevertheless, the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His: and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Whilst talking of parish matters, I must tell you that we have

* Now Dr Vaughan, late of Harrow.

begun a Shoe Club for our Day-school children. Mrs N. will get the requisite funds from her friends. We have thought it over a good deal, and I have no doubt of its practicability. I am quite rejoiced, as I think it will be very useful. This morning I have been drawing up the Rules.

On Tuesday I went to the Visitation, quite in Curate's style. I rode to Battle on Mrs Sands's little pony, and then walked from Battle to Hastings. The Charge (Archdeacon Hare's) was excellent, and very much liked by the Clergy. . . . Mr Munn brought me back as far as Ashburnham; from whence I walked home, and arrived here at twelve o'clock at night, tired and wet; for it rained all the evening. At the dinner, the Archdeacon proposed that the Churchwardens should dine with the Clergy; which seemed to meet with general approbation. George Bunsen and Mr Marcus Hare dined with us. . . . Mrs N. is wonderfully well. This air agrees with her entirely. She walks out a good deal, and visits the poor. They seem to like her very much. The singing improves. We practise every day, when there are boys enough. Yesterday, there were 23 children; to-day, above 20. This is an interesting time for me: I have been here just a year; and, on looking back, I see much for which I ought to be humbled, much for which I ought to be thankful. May this new year of my ministry be a blessing to myself and others! . . .

TO G. H. M. WAGNER, ESQ.

December 16, 1845.

I should have answered your letter before, if my time had not been fully occupied. As yet, I have only been able to read at meal-times. This is always a busy season; but this year my work has had to accumulate. . . . As, however, through God's mercy, I am very well, I enjoy having every moment filled up. If, therefore, occasionally you do not receive letters

quite so soon as you expect, you must not conclude that I am unwell, but rather that I *am* well and working. . . . Lord —— is still in Wales: and it is not known when he returns. I hope soon: both because I shall be glad to see him again, and yet more because I long to gain some assistance for my poor people. I fear that they will have much to suffer. It is very distressing to see them often tried to the uttermost, and yet not be able to relieve their many wants. It is great consolation to feel assured that our God cares for them, and that all their wants are felt by Him who had not where to lay His head. I am sure that your hearts will be often lifted in prayer, both that their pilgrimage here may be less embittered by the unkindness of men, and that they may learn to value the riches of Christ; and that, though poor here, may be rich hereafter—"heirs of the kingdom." . . .

TO MISS E. WAGNER.

January 8, 1846.

I was very happy to hear from dear —— and yourself, on my birth-day. Your kind lines were written on a day of great importance to us all, and they arrived here on a day equally solemn to me. I can fully enter into your feelings about the New Year. The experience of the past should make us all feel deeply the uncertainty of the future. "We know not what shall be on the morrow. God carries away our years as with a flood." And yet we may be strong and of good courage. The future is indeed uncertain and unknown to us. But there is no *chance* in it. Every trial is wisely arranged for us: and we have the beautiful promise, "All things shall work together for good for them that love God." And if our years be carried away as with a flood, we may still rejoice; for if we abide in Christ, we know well whither that flood is bearing us. Its surface is not always calm—it is often rough and stormy; but it bears those who are Christ's into a sea of rest. We know not on what part of this

ever-rolling flood our bark now is. We may be near its mouth. But it will be far better for us to be bathing in the sea of everlasting rest, than toiling among the torrents here. "To be with Christ is far better." . . . I am very sorry to hear that you are not yet recovered. . . . I am poorly too. It is only that the liver is sluggish; but it affects my spirits much, and makes labour *very* laborious. I have been likewise much tempted for some days, and have felt very deeply the difficulty of the Christian life. Pray for me, that I may stand in the evil day; and that such painful exercises may be of benefit to me. I fully believe that Satan's most fiery darts are aimed at Ministers.

Mrs N. returned on the last day of the year; and we hope to open the Girls' school on Monday. I have adopted a new rule for both schools, suggested by her. We now admit the children of labourers at five years old; those of farmers, at seven. This has already increased the size of the Boys' school much. Parents are much pleased; and it does very little injury to ——, as labourers could not afford to send their children.

TO MRS. WAGNER.

April 14, 1846.

Dear ——'s letter, just received, tells us of another delay in your return to England. I feel sure that this must be a great trial to you, and to all. It is to me. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Yet, I doubt not, there is mercy in this. Our God has been teaching us many lessons of late, and fulfilling to us that word, "I will lead them in paths that they have not known." . . . Through God's mercy I am wonderfully well, and less fatigued by the labours of Passion Week than usual. On the whole, I think I am gaining strength in body. I have not had much encouragement in my parish lately. One or two seem to be growing: and are, I trust, ripening for the world above. But many are waxing worse and worse. . . . Mrs N. sends you her love. She is very unwell.

At last, to his great delight, the family returned to England; and, from that time till his final departure from Dallington, took up their abode with him in the summer months. His health now required all the care that the most watchful friends could bestow upon it. For some time past the exercise of walking had been very painful to him, and he was obliged to procure a pony to take him on his rounds in the parish. Even this proved insufficient relief; and instead of riding, he used a pony-carriage to go about in. His back, too, became so painful, that "he could not stand in the pulpit; which obliged him to have a high seat there, so that he sat while to all appearance standing." It was plain that he had overtasked his strength, and needed a long interval of rest. And this was soon provided for him; seasonably sent, though the call to cease from work was a most distressing trial to him.

Yet, though he was thus partially disabled, the last two years of his life at Dallington witnessed another undertaking successfully accomplished. He formed an Association of Schoolmasters from the parishes in the neighbourhood; who should meet periodically at his house, for the discussion of such points of interest or difficulty as might suggest themselves in their work or their reading; for the communication to each other of successful plans of instruction, or new sources of information they might discover; and generally, for mutual improvement, professional, intellectual, and spiritual. A written essay, by one of the members, always opened the meeting. He himself was their Secretary, drew up the Rules, acted as Moderator at their meetings, and kept the Book of Minutes. This Book still remains; and shows, in spite of

the modest self-suppression of the writer's own share in the discussions, with what judgment, industry, and affectionate interest, he conducted their proceedings. If ever subjects were wanting, he it was who suggested points for discussion at the next meeting; mathematical, scientific, grammatical, educational, or religious questions; supplying the solutions then, if none succeeded in working them out before. His gentle and instructive criticism of the essays that were read—his skilful delicacy in pointing out fallacies, and correcting crudities—his impartial calmness in checking hot or acrimonious disputes—his unvaried, but unobtrusive, habit of leading the thoughts of the company to those sacred subjects which he felt to be paramount in importance—must have produced a great and most salutary effect upon those young men, raising their estimate of their own calling and position, and stimulating and encouraging them to render themselves more worthy of it.

At last the time came when his connexion with the parish must cease. In May, 1848, the Vicar of Dallington died; and the new Incumbent, soon afterwards nominated, was a young man, who would, of course, reside among his flock, and perform the duties of his cure for himself.

George Wagner's deep sorrow may well be imagined, when he thus found himself obliged to part from those among whom he had laboured so earnestly, and to whom he was so tenderly attached; and the feeling on their part was scarcely less strong. Indeed, with some it was still more intense; for they were not only losing their best earthly friend, but one whose ministry and counsels were associated in their minds with all their

hopes for eternity. And even those whose hearts and consciences had never been effectually touched, began to acknowledge that "a prophet had been among them;" and to feel that, in losing him they were losing a link between themselves and heaven. His own comfort was principally in the unfailing certainty that the event was according to God's will, and that unerring Wisdom and Love would direct it to the good of all; and the immediate prospect was brightened by the persuasion, which he entertained himself, and strove to communicate to the parishioners, that his successor was one whose object and whose spirit would be the same as his own.

He continued among them till the end of the autumn, "labouring abundantly to the last, and even going beyond his strength, that he might, if possible, win one more soul to Christ." At last, on November 20, 1848, the last sermon was preached, the last adieus were said; and he arrived at his father's house, at St Leonard's, a day or two after, fatigued and ill, "with a bad cough, and so weak that he could scarcely walk."

I am sure (he writes, a few days afterwards, to one of his late flock) that you have felt the trial deeply as I have; but I trust that you have also tasted the love of God more and more in this affliction. The Saviour often withdraws from us our friends, our outward helps and blessings; that we may taste how precious and how all-sufficient He is in Himself. Our hearts are too readily contented to remain at a distance from the fountain of all grace: we need uncertainty, suspense, changes, and separation; that we may learn, like Mary, to sit at Jesus' feet. . . . I often think of the striking words of the Baptist, "He must increase, but I must decrease." This ought to be the feeling of every mi-

nister of Christ. Jesus should be all in all in his eyes; and he should desire that *he* may be less and less in the eyes of men, if thereby Jesus may become more and more. I am full of hope that by this change He may increase in the hearts of my beloved brethren in Christ, that they may feel how sweet it is to have a never-changing Saviour. May His love, which has height and length and depth and breadth, be your stay and consolation!

The story which has been just related will speak for itself. It would be useless and impertinent to encumber it with comments. It is offered with a ready acknowledgment that the model is one, in many respects, unattainable by others. Few Clergymen, and still fewer Curates, have at once the means, the capacity, and the leisure for effecting in their parishes what George Wagner effected; nor ought even duty to be pursued to the destruction or the peril of health: but all can appreciate, and all can strive to imitate, the spirit in which he worked. Without that spirit, no real success can be attained in the highest work of the ministry; though reputation and popularity can be purchased much more cheaply. It is only in the name and in the strength of the Redeemer, that the souls of men can be won. And to come in that name, and prevail in that strength, involves the sacrifice and subjugation of self. It is well and right that it should be so. God's work must rest on no foundation but his own. And if, therefore, the ministers of Christ find that men's hearts resist them, and answer not to their call, though they know themselves to be sincere and diligent—if energy and ability and watchfulness seem to be employed in vain—let their self-examination proceed deeper still, aided by such an

example as this which is before us. What humility and self-abasement! what ardent, patient, enduring love for those whom he sought to win! what perseverance in prayer! what outpouring of his whole heart to God! There is no way but this. Even the Chief Shepherd entered not but by the door into the sheepfold. Those that serve under Him must follow His steps. They must seek admittance by Him as the door; or the sheep will not hear their voice; "for they know not the voice of strangers."

CHAPTER III.

BRIGHTON.—GENERAL MINISTRY.

1851—1856.

THERE is a picturesque and romantic interest attaching to a country parish, which finds no place in our idea of ministerial labour in a town. Yet every thoughtful mind must feel that such distinctions are superficial only. To those who are really engaged in the work, and engaged in it heart and soul, the distinctions are of a far different character. The town Clergyman may miss, indeed, the comparative quiet and retirement of a country cure; he may lament the increase of secular business which is forced upon him by his position: but for all which gives his work the highest interest, the phases and the development of human life and character, the unintermitted struggle between evil and good, the pathos and sublimity of this our mortal existence, upon which the issues of immortality depend—above all, for the need and the occasions which continually arise for the use and application of revealed truth—he feels that the town supplies a far richer and grander, as well as wider, field; and few are those, whose heart and energies are consecrated to their Master, who would exchange

such a field for the humbler labours of a country parish, unless compelled by necessity, or convinced by clear indications that such was the will of God.

This was certainly the feeling of George Wagner, when once he had thrown himself into his work at Brighton, and knew and appreciated the opportunities which were set before him. No charms of rural scenery, not even the woods and lanes of his much-loved Dallington, peopled as they were with a thousand human and sacred associations, had such beauty in his eyes, as the low mean rows of poor brick houses, and the formal lines of wealthier habitations, which constituted the district of St Stephen's. Besides, the firm persuasion that this was the post which God had assigned him was strengthened by the grateful consciousness that never before had he enjoyed such health, never had his physical powers been so great, or his spirits so even and so elastic, as he found them under the influence of the Brighton air.

It must not be understood, however, that he passed at once from Dallington to Brighton. It has been seen already in what a weak and broken state of health his six years' labours had left him. An interval of rest was absolutely required; and that interval was prolonged to nearly three years. Much might be told of him during that time, which would interest all who care to trace the course of Christian experience and progress; but it will be necessary to pass rapidly over that period of comparative inaction. He made his home at his father's house at St Leonard's, occupied chiefly with study, and with such share of ministerial work as he felt himself equal to, when-

ever his help was asked for. Visits to his friends in different parts of the country, and excursions with his family, or with some chosen companion, to Scotland, Wales, and the English lakes, diversified his life, and helped him to recover the health which had been so seriously affected: nor did he forget his old and much-loved parishioners at Dallington, with some of whom he kept up a constant correspondence, going over too, occasionally, to the place itself, and strengthening the hands of the new Vicar, the Rev. R. R. Tatham, with whom he kept up a frequent and cordial intercourse.

With regard to his studies, he felt that this was an opportunity not to be lost for acquiring some knowledge of Hebrew, of which hitherto he had been entirely ignorant; and accordingly, soon after his arrival at St Leonard's, he procured a teacher, and applied himself diligently to the work. Besides theological and miscellaneous reading, he now also took up the pursuit of Geology and Botany. To the former of these sciences he was first powerfully attracted by Hugh Miller's *Old Red Sandstone;* a work which delighted him exceedingly; and with the author of which he had the unexpected pleasure of making acquaintance, in one of his excursions to Scotland. In the latter science he more particularly interested himself with the tribe of Ferns, of the British varieties of which he succeeded in making a complete collection in his various rambles and mountain walks.

Meanwhile his ministerial labours found a field close at hand, first of all among his father's household, whom he diligently instructed; and next among the poor of the parish, visiting them under

the direction of the Rev. G. D. St Quintin, then Incumbent of St Leonard's; with whom, and with Mrs St Quintin, he formed an intimate friendship. Much of his time was also given to Miss Priscilla Maurice, the admirable sister of the Rev. F. D. Maurice, herself well known as the Authoress of *Sickness, its Trials and Blessings*, and other similar works; to whom every Thursday he paid a ministerial visit, and gave the Holy Communion. With Mr Maurice himself, he extended and deepened his acquaintance at the house of Mr A. J. Scott (afterwards of Owen's College, Manchester), whose great powers of mind he had learned at Herstmonceux to appreciate and admire, and whose Tuesday evening parties he regularly attended in the spring of 1849, which he spent chiefly in London, attending also a Course of Lectures delivered by Mr (now Dean) Trench. These two latter Theologians did much to enlarge his views, even in matters upon which his own opinions remained unaltered. It was always a great delight to him to be brought in contact with men of independent thought, and high intellectual power, even when differing widely from himself. Thus he esteemed it no small advantage, as well as pleasure, to meet Mr Carlyle in the following summer, on a visit to his friend, Mr Erskine*, of Linlathen: a visit which, independently of this additional attraction, was full of the highest interest and instructiveness. Amongst other friends whose society and conversation were of especial value to him at this time, it may be allowable to mention Sir John Shaw Lefevre, who was often his companion in long walks at St Leonard's, and in literary conferences at night. "The pleasant

* Author of *Internal Evidences of Revealed Religion*, &c.

and instructive conversations I had with him," writes Sir John, "have left, after a busy interval of some years, a grateful recollection of affectionate kindness, and a deep respect for his learning and piety." He often preached also, and otherwise officiated at St Leonard's, and Eastbourne, and other Churches. In the summer of 1851, he took duty for a month in the parish of Herstmonceux, during the absence of Archdeacon Hare; taking up his residence at the Rectory; and working in concert with his friend the Rev. E. Venables, then Curate to the Archdeacon.

During all this time, it was his earnest desire to be at work again, as soon as an opening should be made for him, and his health sufficiently restored: and on two or three occasions, he was almost induced to think that the day was come. More than one desirable Curacy nearly tempted him to try his strength again; and he hesitated for some time before he declined the offer of a country living, made to him by the Earl of Chichester, on the recommendation of Archdeacon Hare, and which promised in some respects to prove another Dallington. He declined it at last, from the conviction that he could not trust his health so far as to undertake the whole duty of a parish single-handed, especially in a locality which perhaps would not agree with him; while he did not think it right that so small a charge should absorb the energies of two. In reply to the letter announcing this final decision, Lord Chichester, while sorrowfully acquiescing in the reasons which determined it, adds, "I have, at all events, gained one thing by the negotiation, in having had the pleasure of contracting a friendship which I trust may be lasting."

It was in the autumn of 1850, when he was travelling in Scotland, that the proposal was first made to him by his uncle, the Vicar of Brighton, that he should undertake the charge of the new Church and District of St Stephen's; the *twelfth* of the churches or chapels which had been built during the incumbency, and chiefly through the energy and liberality, of the Rev. Henry Wagner. Many advantages suggested themselves to him at once,—the bracing air of Brighton, the importance of the work, the society there insured to him of relations and friends. On the other hand, he saw several objections; and he begged the advice of his parents in the matter; adding, that "in the mean time he should ask for guidance and direction from above." The end of these deliberations was his acceptance of the offer; but it was not till the summer of the following year was far advanced, that the state of affairs allowed him to enter upon his cure.

He determined to reside there alone, unaccompanied by any of his family; and accordingly in July 1851 he took up his abode in lodgings, small and in some respects ill-adapted to his purpose; but to which, having attached himself to the people of the house, he clung throughout his Brighton ministry with his usual fidelity.

The Church of St Stephen's had been built of the materials of the Chapel of the Pavilion, taken down when the latter was sold by the Crown, and re-erected at the West-end of Brighton, with only a slight alteration of architectural form and detail.

The Church is a small one (he writes to Mr Harrisson), which is well; and pre-eminently ugly in an architectural point of view, to which I am by no means

indifferent. But I comfort myself with the thought that I shall not be in danger of architectural pride, and hope that God may mould there stones for His spiritual temple.

Some of the sittings were to be free; though fewer than he thought desirable. The rest were to be let for the benefit of the Minister, and the maintenance of the services; subject, however, to a considerable debt, which still remained upon the building when it was opened. The district assigned to it extends from Spring Street (east) to Norfolk Road (west), and from Western Road (south) to Victoria Road (north). The population was estimated, the year after, at about 1,200.

And now it remains to give an account of his five years' ministry at Brighton: which will best be done perhaps, as his life was not an eventful one, by discarding chronological arrangement, and distributing his work under its several heads, that the amount of his labours and the extent of his influence may be the better appreciated.

At the same time, let it be plainly understood from the beginning, and distinctly remembered, that throughout this period, George Wagner occupied a subordinate, if not a dependent, position. Being merely a district minister, he had no power to apply and to carry out the parochial system of our Church, in all its integrity: and even within his own district, his authority was limited. The results of his labours therefore, and even his plans and arrangements, were but an imperfect expression of what he desired, and might have attempted, to effect. Whether those results, under other circumstances, would have been larger and happier, it is needless to conjecture and to speculate upon. As it was, in his humbler position he

was sheltered from those darts of jealousy, and opposition, and party spirit, and calumny, which ever strike the highest places: and he was spared the difficult task of combining, controlling, and reconciling the dissimilar and often discordant elements which he would have had to deal with, even among his fellow-labourers in the work. Perhaps it was happy for him that he was spared this perilous trial—perilous, though it *might* have led to still more eminent usefulness; it was happy for him, at any rate, that, released from so many secular cares, he was able more unreservedly to "give himself to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

The materials of the following summary, and in many cases the very words in which it is conveyed, are supplied by those who were associated with him in his work, or who benefited by it more especially.

1. Besides the ordinary ministrations in the morning and afternoon of Sundays, and of the great Church Festivals, there was a full Service in St Stephen's Church on Wednesdays, and there were Prayers on Fridays, and on all of the Saints' days. The Holy Communion was administered on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month; in the latter case at 9 A.M. When the Schools for the upper classes, some of which attended St Stephen's, were in Brighton, there was catechising in the Service on every alternate Friday.

In the division of labour with his Curates, George Wagner showed at once his determination not to spare himself; and his desire to assume nothing beyond the necessary priority of his position. He always took the morning sermon, and read prayers in the afternoon; except on the

first Sunday in each month, when he preached in the afternoon to a congregation of children.

For the Wednesday's Service he chose some special subject, delivering courses of Lectures alternately with his Curate; and when not thus lecturing, he undertook the catechetical instruction on the Friday. These Wednesday Lectures were especially acceptable to his congregation. He seemed to stand forth more distinctively as their Pastor, and to address them even more affectionately, than on other occasions. For, in truth, he knew that few would care to come at that time, but those whose hearts were opened, or at least disposed to hear: and he spoke to them with increased freedom and confidence accordingly, carrying them on with him, and building them up in the faith. The same may be said of the Sermons delivered in Passion Week. On New Year's Day he would select some text, which he commended to his people as their motto for the year.

As a preacher, he was not much adapted to become a favourite with the multitude; and those who heard him only two or three times, would hardly understand the impression he produced, and the influence he exercised over his habitual hearers. In his manner of delivery, he laboured under considerable disadvantage in consequence of his deafness; which produced a certain flatness and sameness of intonation, and provoked the remark that he was not sufficiently animated. But this defect was compensated by the deep solemnity, the sweet calmness, and the entire simplicity which pervaded his words, and looks, and whole demeanour. It was impossible to hear him, without feeling how deep was his own conviction

of the truth of that Gospel which he preached: nor were there wanting instances of persons who were chiefly and at once impressed by that very delivery which others regarded as defective.

"I first saw him in church," says one who attributes to his ministry the highest blessing which one fellow-creature can convey to another, "and was immediately arrested by his voice and manner. It was at once solemn, earnest, and touching: and his reading of the Prayers and Scriptures was very remarkable. More than once has the truth dawned on my heart, when he was reading the Scriptures, especially the Gospels."

The subject of Doctrine is too important to be discussed here, and demands a more careful analysis.

His style was that of a thoroughly educated man; a man of too well-disciplined a mind, too correct a taste, and above all, too chastened and sincere a spirit, to use or to tolerate ornamental language. Before an educated congregation he seldom employed even an illustration, or a metaphor; never, unless he felt that it was really needed. His message was too high, too earnest, too sacred in his eyes, to be dressed out with artificial attractions. He forgot himself in his office, and before his Master. Hence his words were simple, truthful, solid, forcible. With the exception of a few mannerisms, his style deserved that highest praise, that it expressed exactly the thought which he intended to embody without drawing attention to its form; and adapted itself, unbidden, to the feelings which occupied his heart, rising or falling as emotion prompted, and as the tide of imagination swelled or ebbed within his mind.

His own estimate of his sermons may be best learned from the following extract from his letters:—

With regard to sermons, I beg your most fervent prayers. I long, I long for a more broken heart; to cease altogether from myself, and to live more fully in Jesus. I long to ascend the pulpit each Sunday, with deeper solemnity of mind, with more profound abasement of myself, and in more simple dependence on my Saviour. It often seems to me on the very verge of impossibility, that anything proceeding from a heart like mine can ever help any one: and yet I know that God's power and love can overleap all impossibilities. Oh that He may do so, and gather souls to Himself at St Stephen's! To Him be all the glory.

It was his habit also never to look for any results from his preaching. He felt (so he told his curate) that the changing character of his congregation was a source of consolation to him; because the word might take effect upon a casual hearer, and God would carry on the work without his knowing anything about it. He had once been very anxious (he said) to see some proof of success in his preaching; but he was convinced that this was very wrong, and very dangerous. Yet multitudes will testify that "his Gospel came unto them not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

Compare with his own estimate of himself the testimony of his Curate, Mr Clarke. "His sermons were unusually fresh and new. I never heard so comprehensive a preacher, or one so practical, or one more deeply spiritual. Each portion of revealed truth received from him its share of attention: and so much independent thought and study

was brought to bear upon his sermons, that they were never commonplace. After hearing him week after week, for between three and four years, I felt that there was always something new and fresh in his mode of propounding truth."

Or take the deliberate judgment of one of his congregation; whose very name, if mentioned, would carry authority with it. "If the true end of preaching is not merely to interest or instruct, but above all to arouse and to edify, he must be classed as amongst the most useful and influential of the preachers of the day."

At Brighton, he seldom, or never preached extempore, except on the more irregular occasions. The mass of written sermons which he has left behind him attests his diligence; and when (as in Passion Week) it was necessary to produce one at least every day, amidst his many engagements and distractions, the thought and care bestowed upon each of them becomes a matter for surprise and admiration. Amongst all these sermons, too, there is not one (apparently) which was preached a second time in St Stephen's; and those which have been delivered twice or oftener, in other pulpits than his own, are, for the most part, such as he had specially prepared in the first place for a congregation of strangers, and which, accordingly, he felt to be equally suitable to a similar audience elsewhere.

"Unless some special call rendered it impossible, he was always present at the Week-day Services of his Church, even when not taking part in the duty. He was most unwilling, however, to take no share in this. His people remember well the deep devotion of his manner when ministering before them. They were wont to speak of his

appearance as almost apostolic. When administering the Lord's Supper, he seemed to feel especially the presence of God: and he took care not to lose a moment of communion with Him, as every pause and interval of the Service was occupied by him in prayer. It was his custom, before every Service, to offer up a short prayer in the Vestry with the Clergyman who shared the duty with him, asking for God's presence and blessing. He objected strongly to the help of a clerk for the responses, and frequently urged upon the congregation the duty of uniting their voices in prayer and praise. He had a strong wish also, that the singing should be of a purely congregational character, and therefore had no regular choir:" though several members of the congregation used to meet together for an hour on the Saturdays, for the purpose of practising, and thus enable themselves to lead their fellow-worshippers with better effect.

It was not until the last year of his ministry that Baptisms were celebrated in the Church. He was very glad to take advantage of a wish, which was expressed, that he would allow it; and himself undertook the expense of the Font, sacrificing also eight sittings to make room for it. Some of his congregation, hearing of this, resolved immediately that he must not be allowed to bear the cost; and, having found out the exact expense which he had been put to, sent him the money by one of their body, (the rest of them suppressing their names,) with suitable expressions of their regard, and explanations of the grounds on which they claimed thus to act. This little testimony of their esteem and consideration touched and delighted him extremely.

His relations with his Curates were always of

the most confiding and endearing character. He ever sought to "prefer them to himself in honour," courting their counsel no less than their sympathy and confidence, and striving to realize a complete unity of object and purpose and action. It was part of the weekly arrangements, that they should meet at his house for half-an-hour on Wednesdays before the Morning Service, for special prayer, personal and intercessory, and joint consideration of some passage of Scripture which bore upon their pastoral work. More particular deliberations, and the transaction of business, were reserved for other times.

His first Curate was the Reverend William Stow, a young Clergyman who soon became to him a very brother; but who left him in a few months, being appointed to a living of his own. Here he was almost immediately seized with an illness which, not long afterwards, terminated in death. George Wagner preached a sermon of affectionate tribute to his memory; and the correspondence which he kept up with the widow only ceased with his own life.

The letter, which he wrote to her on the occasion just referred to, is so touching and beautiful, that it must be given almost at length :—

May 3, 1852.

My dear Mrs Stow,

I enclose a sermon which I preached yesterday morning; as at its close are some remarks concerning your dear, dear husband. Like all my thoughts, they are very poor. Still, though they are so, and there is nothing in them that can be in the least new to you, yet I send them, because not a breath that bears forth anything concerning one so dear to you can be without interest to yourself. And if there is

nothing else, you will find in it an expression of a love to him, which I dare not fully express: and this now flows full in sympathy with you, in your deep bereavement. Many of my congregation were deeply affected, especially at his touching prayer. May the God of all grace rivet it on their hearts, and lead them to seek their Saviour, whilst He may be found! This surely is one reason why God so mysteriously removes His most faithful servants, even that others may be led to serve. May my dear brother's departure be the means of quickening the steps of many towards Zion! I do not know whether the 68th Psalm has been a favourite with you. There are some beautiful verses in it, especially verse 13, and verse 28. We, like Israel of old, have often to "lie among the pots;" weary, downcast, and suffering—our hearts full of trembling, and scarcely able to look up—unable and almost unwilling to think that it can ever be otherwise. And yet a day will come when we "shall be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold"—when every ray of the Sun of righteousness will be caught by our souls, and be reflected to others.

The Clergymen who after this were successively, and for some time conjointly, his Curates, the Rev. W. Clarke and Rev. H. A. Olivier, to whose records of their beloved friend a great part of this Chapter is due, found in him the same brotherly affection, the same encouraging and sanctifying influences; and none can testify more fully than they can to "the blessing which resulted from intercourse with him,"—"the attraction of the zeal and love which stirred him,"—"the vision of sweetness which the very remembrance of his life brings up; a picture of heavenly beauty, which I never expect to find surpassed, if equalled, in the life of any mortal man."

2. The great majority of the congregation at

St Stephen's belonged to the upper and educated classes; and to them, therefore, out of Church as well as in it, George Wagner felt that a very large part of his pastoral ministrations were due. He made it a point to call upon every one who took a sitting in the Church, or who might be considered to be really connected with it, as well as on all who resided within the District—though these latter he did not continue to regard as members of his flock, if he found that they attached themselves to another Minister by preference. He did not decline society: but rigidly restricted himself to two stated evenings in the week for this purpose, accepting the first invitations which reached him. For he courted friendly intercourse with the richer, no less than the poorer members of his flock; only striving with faithfulness and zeal to impart to that intercourse the character which he desired. This sort of pastoral work was new to him; but it need hardly be said how gracefully and efficiently it was done, by a man of his mental and spiritual endowments. In many cases the advances which he thus made were cordially met. The warmest Christian friendship grew up between the Minister and several of his educated parishioners; at whose houses for some time he used in rotation to hold evening meetings for reading the Scriptures and for prayer. From them he drew his District Visitors, his Sunday-school Teachers, and his assistants and co-operators in those other difficult and delicate tasks which we shall presently have occasion to mention. Nor did he feel himself, or allow them to think, that by this co-operation they were conferring a personal benefit upon him. Both he and they regarded this work in a far higher point of view. It was a privilege,

an honour, a blessing in itself, to be employed as instruments for the advancement of God's kingdom. He gave them his Christian confidence, and "desired fruit that should abound to their account;" and that confidence, and the love which it manifested, was a far better encouragement and reward than thanks or compliments. And even in quarters where sympathy was less complete, his visits were never unacceptable; and often recognised as a great source of consolation and improvement. He made his influence felt, and kept the supreme importance of holy things in view, without in any way forcing the subject upon others, and without a particle of stiffness, or cant, or the least tinge of pretension to a more saintly character than his fellows. "I used sometimes to attend him in his visiting," says Mr Clarke, "and was always interested in the fertility of his conversation. He seemed so conversant with the current literature and topics of interest of the day. But I observed that he rarely, if ever, closed a visit without giving the conversation some happy and improving turn; or introducing with consummate tact some little hint in the way of advice, or rebuke, or suggestion, conveyed so skilfully and gently as to edify without giving offence." All alike could see that should any need arise, in time of affliction, or difficulty, or mental distress, his heart was open to them, his time and his advice were at their service. And richly were these expectations fulfilled, to those who availed themselves of the opportunity. They found in him not only a patient listener, and a sincere sympathizer; but also a wise and thoughtful counsellor, a ready and active helper, and (if the word be not misunderstood) a faithful and discerning

confessor. It would be wrong to adduce some instances of this which might be mentioned; but it is allowable to pass a little way out of these generalities. "We never had such a friend before," writes one of his congregation, "or one who so sympathized with our every joy or sorrow, and who was at any time so kindly ready to give advice or comfort as it was needed. Oh, how well I remember the joy with which we heard his well-known knock, so characteristic of himself; and his bright, joyous, and almost angelic expression when he came into the room; and then the happy holy conversation, which proceeded 'out of the abundance of his heart;' so that I think he never left us without our feeling, *What must heaven be?*"

"He always met you with such sweetness and ready sympathy," is the testimony of another, "that it was not difficult to confide to him the inward struggles of the spirit. You were sure to find in him heartfelt sympathy; and his advice was evidently founded upon his own long-tried experience.... His wisdom struck me more particularly with regard to the *young*. I learnt more from him with regard to the religious instruction of children, than from any one I ever came in contact with.... His advice to parents was most solemn and searching. '*Be yourselves* what you would have your children be, is the secret of all good training,' he would say."

He interested himself also in the studies, and mental cultivation, of his people, especially if it bore, or could be made to bear (and what cultivation could not?) upon their spiritual welfare. He offered one of his congregation to teach her German, setting and hearing the requisite lessons, and correcting exercises. And so with other in-

tellectual pursuits. "Once having been advised," writes a parishioner of his, "to read a difficult and rather doubtful book, I lent it to him first, and begged him to make notes for me on the margin. Instead of this, he returned it to me with many sheets of full and most valuable notes upon it, chapter by chapter."

Another thus gives a similar testimony:— "He never failed to come to you in any difficult case, if applied to, even though he might have much occupation; and after he had seen you on the subject which had given you pain, he would revert to it in his next visit. On one occasion, when I was in great trouble to know whether I had done right, on detailing the circumstances of the case to him, he said, 'I cannot see that there has been any wrong done on your part; but then it is the *motive* with which you did it which determines the action, and this I can be no judge of.'"

Above all, in those critical seasons when the human heart most needs Christian sympathy and counsel, it was his delight to give it. Two such cases may be mentioned, as they are secure from recognition. "A young lady, who was in Brighton only for a short time, was taken to hear him preach. She had always been an amiable character, and had a regard for religion and religious people. But she now first found out her danger ... and could not be happy till she had opened her heart to him. Nothing could exceed the kindness and patience he showed in teaching, guiding, and encouraging her. The time was short in which he could minister to her; and yet it was sufficient, with God's blessing, to enable her to go on her way rejoicing."

The other is more striking still. There was a lady who had come with her husband to Brighton, to spend some days at an hotel. She was utterly worldly, and sadly ignorant of religion, though it was her habit to go to church once on Sundays, even at a watering-place, asking, on such occasions, which was the most *fashionable* church. This time however, she made no such inquiry; but went out into the street, on Sunday, undirected, and with no special purpose in view. "Oh," she thought to herself, "it is not a fashionable church that I want. There is something more than this." She came to the door of St Stephen's; and seeing what the building was, went in. George Wagner preached. The words of the sermon entered like a sword into her heart; and on her return home, she could not rest till she had written to him, begging for his advice and guidance. He came to her at the hotel; and heard a tale of deep and aggravated sorrow, and complicated difficulties, besides her spiritual distress. He soothed, and counselled, and prayed with her; and on her departure from Brighton continued to correspond with her, not without a marked and blessed effect resulting from his labours.*

But it was, perhaps, in the sick room, and by the bed of suffering, that the peculiar value of

* The sequel of this story is too remarkable to be omitted. On giving her the promise of secrecy which she exacted, he had begged to be allowed to make *one* exception; "there was a friend with whom he continually prayed, and he loved to mention in his prayers the cases that lay nearest to his heart." Some years after this, when George Wagner's illness had removed him from England, the same lady, being again on a visit to Brighton, had occasion to call upon one of the congregation of St Stephens, about a charitable institution in which she was interested. The lady upon whom she called was one of those who draw out, as by a spell, the confidence of their fellow-creatures; and before

his ministrations was most felt. His humility and delicacy of mind, his considerate sympathy, and his quick perception of what was chiefly needed in each particular case, made him a welcome visitor, where a less gentle and less skilful touch would have pained and burdened the sufferer. The following testimony of one whom he thus attended, while it illustrates, with singular fulness, the observations which have just been made, is the more valuable, as the lady herself was one who differed from him widely in various points of religious opinion:—"Mr George Wagner visited me ministerially, during a tedious and painful illness at Brighton. We had not previously been acquainted. I was very much impressed with almost the first words he said to me: 'This is the will of God, even your sanctification.' That one great truth which he placed before my mind, seemed at once to tranquillise and feed it, by supplying me with a subject for reflection. I do not know whether it was his intention, but it certainly seemed to be his practice, to leave some idea or text for meditation. His visit generally began with conversation, in which he entered kindly into one's various trials. He then read a portion of Scripture, and concluded by offering up a prayer, in which he seemed to give utterance to the tender consideration he had for the wants and sufferings of others.

"For many months he visited me late on Saturday afternoons: and one of his frequent petitions was for a blessing on the ensuing day.

the interview was over, the visitor had confided to her the secret sorrows of her life. "There is but one other being in the world (she concluded) to whom I ever told it, Mr George Wagner." "Oh how often (was the reply) have he and I *knelt by that chair to pray for you!*"

I felt it might be an answer to those earnest prayers, that my many solitary silent Sundays were not days of weariness, but periods of abounding peace. On one occasion I asked him how to silence that oft-recurring question, Why the Lord thus dealt with me? (for my illness was long, and my other griefs were many). He promptly replied in the words of Scripture, 'The Lord shall reveal even this unto you.' One day I was in great sorrow, hourly expecting to hear of the death of a young friend, under peculiarly touching circumstances. He read to me the martyrdom of St Stephen; pointing out how quickly he passed from a painful death to the immediate presence of his Lord, standing waiting to receive and welcome the spirit of the saint. He made everything an occasion of prayer. It was needful I should be removed from one house to another; and though the distance was short, yet to me the fatigue was formidable. What courage it gave me to see him that day, and to be reminded of that beautiful prayer, 'If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence!' Towards the end of the year, I became so ill, that every one considered I was dying; and I supposed my summons was at hand. Mr Wagner came, and said, 'You are too weak to think much. Only remember, that, if you are unable to lay hold on God, *He* holds *you* with His right hand.' He never spoke of differences in religious opinions: but always aimed at raising and fixing my thoughts on those great truths which are an anchor of the soul. Once I was speaking of the example of Saints. He replied emphatically, 'It is safer to meditate on the example of Jesus—the only perfect example.'"

Nor, while attending the sick, did he forget the opportunity thus given to the Minister of Christ for influencing the other members of the family; nor fail to offer that sympathy, which is so welcome and so powerful for good, when warm and genuine as his always was. Many is the household which remembers with gratitude the use he made of some melancholy occasion which brought him first amongst them. One family thankfully records his weekly visits to a suffering relation, ever resulting in consolation to the other members also, and the humility with which he would reply when thanked for his attendance, "I consider it a great privilege to myself to visit her." When the sufferer died, he asked to be allowed to perform the Funeral Service, though the corpse had to be removed to the family vault more than fifty miles distant; requesting, as a favour to himself, what the family could not but feel to be an act of the most delicate consideration to themselves: and, taking his place in a railway-carriage with a brother of the deceased, he passed the time in a conversation, the impression left by which remains to this day.

It has been remarked already how careful he was to keep sight, if possible, of those whom he had influenced, or hoped to influence, for good, even when they were removed to a distance. A beautiful instance of this practice presents itself here, in connexion with his visitation of the sick. A lady had come to Brighton for her health, and attended his ministry, during which time she was prepared by him for Confirmation. Two years afterwards, a sad illness and the pressure of most painful circumstances, caused her to seek refuge in a London hospital, where she died. There he

visited her three times. In his last visit he found she had been removed to another ward, and was so sadly changed by suffering, that he supposed the nurse had brought him to some one else. But the dying lady recognised him; and, putting out her hand, said, "while the very shades of death were gathering upon her brow," "*Christ is all sufficient.*" Blessed token granted him of the success vouchsafed to his long labour of love! As he departed, she repeated three times—"God bless you!"

Nor was it only those who asked his help, or who had some claim on his attentions, whom he desired and strove to benefit. He was ever ready, ever anxious, to answer any call, or avail himself of any opening that occurred. "I remember telling him," says one of his congregation, "of an old gentleman living opposite to us, who was more than eighty years of age, and who (as we had heard) had never been to church for twenty years, although he was strong and active. The next time we saw him, we found he had not been able to rest without making an effort to see him, though unfortunately he did not succeed. Another time, when he heard of a young officer being very ill, though he called once and again, and failed to get admittance, he made another effort and was successful. How few there are that are thus earnest to save souls!"

One other instance may be mentioned, as showing the breadth and the hopefulness of his charity. There was a young man lodging in the district for some time, who was avowedly a free-thinker. George Wagner heard of him, and deeply interested himself about him. He invited him frequently to breakfast, and otherwise sought to

draw him gently to the knowledge of the truth which is in Christ. The young man left Brighton; but not before he had been much influenced (as there is reason to believe) by the example he had seen.

3. If the work of the ministry among the upper classes was ground heretofore untried by him, the same thing cannot be said of his pastoral intercourse with the poor; and to this he gave himself (if possible) with still greater zeal, and certainly with still keener delight. He felt it was emphatically his Master's work; and he loved it more than all besides. "In order truly to understand his work among the poor," (says one of his district visitors,) "they themselves should be seen and listened to: for no narrative, however correct, can convey a just idea of the effect his ministry produced, or of the abiding influence of it." "His deep sympathy with the sick and sorrowful" (writes another) "was truly like that of his Divine Master; so gentle, so tender, so patient! Delicate as he was, no weather prevented him from visiting them, early or late. Even the irreligious bear testimony to his unceasing kindness: and all the poor in my district say, they never again shall meet with such a Christian. '*So like our Saviour:*' that is their expression."

It will be particularly observed (the poor never failed to observe and appreciate it) with what *delicacy* he treated them, what honour he conceded and paid to that common humanity which Christ had redeemed, and which he felt was as precious in God's sight, and as capable of the highest elevation and dignity in them, as it is in the most cultivated, the most refined, and the noblest of mankind.

From the authorities above referred to, and from other similar sources, the following passages are quoted:—

It was to the poor of his flock that his sympathy was most drawn out. The desolate and sorrowful were sure of his help: and his *way* of helping them (as many have told me) was the best part of it. One poor woman remarked, that he always made her feel, when he called, as though *she* were doing him a favour in receiving him, rather than he doing her one. Another whom he visited, on hearing that she was ill, said that he remonstrated with her for not having sent for him, as he might not have known her state. She replied, that much as she longed to see him, she hesitated to ask him to call, knowing his many engagements. He told her never to do so again: "for," said he, "you should remember that it is my greatest pleasure to come to you when ill, or in distress." And this was said (she remarked) in such a way that I knew it was true.

A woman, whose husband was long ill, told me that Mr Wagner constantly visited him. She said, that on going one day into the room after Mr Wagner left, her husband said to her, "Oh, I feel as if an angel had been sitting with me." After these visits (she added) she could not help remarking the effects left on her husband's mind, in the deepened submission, and increased holiness of his character.

His unwearied kindness and devotion in the case of a poor young man of nineteen, who died of consumption, came under my own observation, and was very striking. When Mr Wagner first saw him, he was very unhappy about the spiritual condition of this youth, and earnestly did he watch for some proof of preparation for the eternal world, to which he was evidently hastening. The mother told me, with many tears, that the tenderness, and faithfulness, and sweet patience of Mr Wagner with her poor boy could never

be effaced from her mind. Notwithstanding his unceasing occupations during the Confirmation time, he begged of her to send for him at any hour, night or day, if her son seemed to wish it. After watching this case for long, with that heartfelt anxiety known only to the faithful Pastor, he had the happiness of believing that the youth died a real penitent, rejoicing in the mercy of his Lord and Saviour. The mother spoke gratefully of the sympathy Mr Wagner showed her at this time of trial, especially of his offering to perform the funeral. On the morning of the day, he went to the house and prayed with the family: "and such a prayer!" said she; "that did indeed comfort us."

All he said seemed to leave such a deep impression. One poor girl, who was very ignorant, and had only a few weeks before come out of prison, and with whom he talked and prayed only once before she went to a Reformatory, wrote to me at least two years afterwards to ask me the name of the Clergyman who had prayed with her before she left Brighton: for she could not remember it, although she had never forgotten his prayer, nor a short one which he taught her, and which she still uses.

He was so ready ever with sympathy and consolation, that he had more work in this way than his health could bear. I once knew him to be at the sick-bed of a young child at six in the morning, though he had left it late the night before. The parents, who were poor people, feared the child was worse; and he was sent for at that early hour: so sure were they of his readiness to come. He never would be thanked for his acts of kindness, or for his ministrations. "No," he would say, "you must thank God." It seemed quite painful to him to hear any good in himself mentioned.

How he used to sorrow for those who were yet in

their sins! On two occasions especially, which I remember, his countenance was quite changed, and he seemed in deep sorrow.

His great liberality to the poor was accompanied with true discrimination. Gentle and charitable as he was, he was not imposed upon by false pretences, nor would he foster idleness or improvidence. His extreme kindliness of spirit must have made reproof a painful task; yet in the few instances which came under my knowledge, he did not shrink from faithfully setting before the person in error the sinful and dangerous consequences of wrong conduct.

On the other hand, none felt more deeply than he that "it is more blessed to give than to receive:" and none knew better how to give.

As exemplifying his extreme delicacy, I may mention the case of a family, who had been in much better circumstances; but who had lost all. In giving them pecuniary relief, he felt that he might hurt their feelings; but sending for the eldest daughter, he said, in presenting her with a sovereign, "You know from *Whom* this comes." This little story is only one of many others which might be related of him, did we but know to whom to go; and had we the power of bringing to the light of day deeds concerning which his right hand knew not what his left hand did.

His landlady speaks much of his care and thought for the poor, often sending them what she had prepared for his own dinner, in spite of her remonstrances. "He thought anything," she said, "good enough for himself."

The other day, I met with a poor woman, who, when telling me her many troubles, broke forth in a strain of gratitude and affection for Mr Wagner, and of all that he had done for her and hers. I inquired

her history more particularly; and heard a tale of deep and heavy trial from sickness and poverty, and the usual story of all he had done to lighten these sorrows, and to teach her to bear them aright. Her husband had been entirely laid aside from work, by severe and long-continued illness, which ended, after years of suffering, in death. She said that at first he could only repine, and think it hard that he should be thus struck down in the vigour of his days; "but," said she, "after he knew Mr Wagner, who visited him always once, and often two or three times a week, his mind became changed, and at last he could bless God for his affliction." The poor woman told me that after her husband's death, who left her with six children unprovided for, she must have sunk under her heavy burden, but for the sympathy and unwearied kindness of Mr Wagner. "He let me," said she, "tell him all I felt; and I could tell him all: to no one could I open my heart as to him. Oh!" added she, "what a friend we have lost! He told my husband on his death-bed that he would never forsake us, and this was such a comfort to him then." She gave me some letters she had received from him, about placing one of her daughters as Pupil-teacher in a school. They were written during his last illness; one in pencil written from his couch, and still about these plans for her daughter. "E. has been much in my thoughts lately," he says. "Tell her not to fear, but to commend herself and her ways into the hands of the Lord; and then all must be well. If she is calm, trusting in God, she will do everything [in her examination] much better." And so it was that he gained the hearts of his people. His own heart was with them; and he thought nothing which interested them, too small to interest him.

This last observation may be aptly illustrated by the following little anecdote.

A poor man was suffering severely from pain in

his head. "Wear a straw-hat, John," said Mr Wagner; "I do when I am in the country; for I can tell you I suffer in my head too." *John* not only took to the straw-hat, but ever after used to speak of him as "my friend Mr Wagner." He felt a oneness with his Minister, who had so identified their little common troubles.

"His usual time for parochial visiting" (says Mr Clarke) "was five hours a day, except when he had some special interruptions, which doubtless used often to occur; but these too were of a parochial nature. My own observation would have assigned about five hours to his visiting, and one day I remember his telling me that such was the time he allotted to this portion of his work."

The calls at his house, however, especially by the poor, according to his landlady's account, were incessant; and she, seeing him gradually wearing himself out, ventured to propose that he should appoint a set time for receiving people. This, she says, was the only occasion on which she saw him at all ruffled. He said to her with great earnestness, "Pray, Mrs ——, do not propose to me such a thing. My Master never sent any away who wished to see Him; and I must not. How do we know they would ever come again?"

But it was not only within the bounds of his own district that these labours were carried on. "He could not allow himself," says Mr Olivier, "to be tied by conventional arrangements. If he heard of a case of sorrow, or sickness, or conviction of sin, he sought it out wherever it was, and devoted himself to it. It was very remarkable how he thus went after the *one sheep*. I have noticed it, and heard of it, again and again. It was but the other day that, in visiting a young

woman who was dying, I heard how he went to a friend of hers, day after day, for three months during her last illness; how he found her ignorant, and impenitent, and careless; and so taught her that her end was perfect peace. Go where he would, there must have been a peculiar power in his exhortations and warnings, and a peculiar fervour in his prayers; for his visits were always remembered with gratitude, and their influence acknowledged even by unconcerned attendants. He, if any one, knew how to speak a word in season..... He said on one occasion of a woman who had rejected his ministerial visits, that he would win her by love: *and so he did.*"

On the other hand, he knew well how to act firmly and unrelentingly in cases of imposture. There was a woman at Dallington who had grossly deceived him, and had shown that she united the most consummate hypocrisy with shameless iniquity. He left her, on the discovery, with words of solemn and impressive warning. During his stay at St Leonard's, in the interval of his ministry, his mother told him of a woman whom she had fallen in with there, who interested her exceedingly, and begged him to accompany her to the house. He went; and there found his false parishioner! Sternly and silently he sat, watching the woman; while his mother, surprised at his silence and the unwonted expression of his countenance, continued the conversation. At last he rose; and drawing her out of the house, explained to her his knowledge of the case, and his conviction that no change for the better had taken place as yet. Some years afterwards, one of his parishioners at Brighton consulted him about a woman she had found at the

other end of the town, whose case perplexed and distressed her; for she seemed to know the Scriptures from beginning to end, yet was evidently living in sin. He went with his friend to visit this person. It was the same woman! Instantly he turned away. "Let us go," he said; "this is no case for *us* to deal with."

The absence of the poor, except in small numbers, from his Church was, as may well be conceived, a source of sorrow and disappointment to him; though certainly it was an advantage to him, as a preacher, to have a less mixed congregation to address. He tried to make up for this want by the institution of cottage lectures, which he and his Curate held weekly in different parts of the district. But this would not content him. "Day after day," writes one of his most valued associates in his work, "it was his habit (till it became necessary to remonstrate with him) to go through the poorest parts of the East Cliff, wholly bent upon reclaiming and recalling the lowest and most abandoned from their evil ways. If a week passed, and he had not been on one of these truly missionary excursions, it made him (he said) miserable. And many are the touching little notes I have had, entreating me to accompany him in this work." It was in the same spirit that in the year 1854 he commenced preaching in the open air, which no clergyman had as yet attempted in Brighton; not so much with any intention of continuing it, (for he knew that he was physically incapable of sustained exertion of this sort,) but to set the example; with the hope that others, who were stronger than he, might carry on the work: a hope and expectation which were amply fulfilled.

4. With the recollection of Dallington fresh in his mind, and with the strong sense he entertained of the importance of schools, it was a necessity with him to endeavour from the beginning to procure this advantage for the district of St Stephen's. There was no small difficulty in effecting this. The sum required for such a work is large, and seldom to be raised without great effort; and in this case, there was a considerable debt already upon the church, which had to be cleared away. However, from the very first, he began to collect contributions for this cherished object, contributing largely himself, and trying to interest his friends in the matter, as well as the members of his congregation. To the latter he issued an address, grounding his appeal on "the universal conviction that no parish can be properly worked without schools;" and adding that "the same holds good of Districts, which ought to be assimilated as far as possible to our admirable parochial system."

The fund thus instituted grew steadily, though not so rapidly as he had hoped, and often from unforeseen sources, amidst disappointment elsewhere; "drops coming," as he expressed it, "where he expected showers, and showers where he only looked for drops." But in two or three years' time it had become sufficiently large to justify him in commencing operations, making himself responsible for such deficit as might arise. To obtain a proper site was another difficulty, and proved a greater one than could have been anticipated; but at last, through unwearied patience and perseverance, all these obstacles were surmounted, and the buildings were completed; and on Nov. 5, 1855, he had the happiness of opening the new National Schools of the District of S

Stephen's with Divine Service in Church, followed by festivities both for the children and their parents.

"He had a great idea," says Mr Olivier, "of *treats* as a means of carrying on a school. On the other hand, he would allow of no such thing as a *reward:* the children should find sufficient satisfaction in doing well, and they should need no other stimulus; or rather, it was his hope that they might be taught not to require it. He thought also that the system of rewards excited considerable jealousy among the parents."

Though he was thus allowed to open and to start the schools which his energy had created, they had hardly got into complete working order, when his failing health compelled him to leave Brighton; but he superintended them long enough to show what were his intentions, and, indeed, his practice. He visited the Boys' school, and took a class, twice every week; and gave a lesson every Tuesday to the Girls; besides daily visits; for he seldom, if ever, passed down the street without looking in, and giving the teachers and the taught a word or smile of encouragement. His schoolmaster was his old and tried coadjutor, whom he had trained himself, and proved by long service at Dallington; and who, on his first settlement at Brighton, had followed him thither, acting since that time as collector, and verger, and amanuensis, and helping him in various other capacities. The excellent mistress, under whom the Girls' school was opened, held her appointment only provisionally, not being *certificated* (a qualification insisted on by the managing committee): nor did he remain long enough to work with her successor, though the appointment was of his making. The testimony of the first mistress gives a delightful picture

of the warm and loving interest which he took in the children and in herself. "When at home, it was not unusual for him to visit us two or three times a day. Coming in with one of his pleasant smiles, he would say, 'I have only come to bless you.' If he stayed to hear me give a lesson instead of teaching himself, he would sit down with the children, saying playfully as he did so, 'I am the first boy in the Class of Honour.' During the giving of the lesson, he would sometimes get up, and tell us something that would make us laugh, he himself joining as heartily in it as any of the children. Early one very cold morning in January, I found him playing with the children, clapping their hands, and stamping their feet; his merry laugh being the loudest of them all. If any were in sorrow, he would not leave us till all was happy again."

The affectionate interest which he took in those fellow-labourers whom he esteemed and valued, was shown in the case of this mistress, as it had been before in that of his Dallington coadjutors. He was very sorry to part with her, and did not rest till he had procured her a situation elsewhere. The numerous letters addressed to her by him, at Brighton, and afterwards, attest a relation which seldom subsists between a clergyman and his subordinates. An extract from one of them, written the day before she gave up the school, will at once illustrate this, and show also how judiciously he felt about the treatment of children.

It is a great grief to me to be absent from home, just at this time especially; but it is our Father's appointment, and must be merciful and loving. . . . I should like the names of the Class of Honour to be left up. It is well for the new mistress to know who

belonged to it, even if she does not wish to continue it. . . . I am rather sorry that you have chosen that beautiful passage in the Acts [20th Chapter] for to-morrow. It is too affecting, and must harrow their feelings. I dread this with children. *You* have gone through much suffering: and everything pathetic is attractive to you. But this is not natural to children. Their feelings are sacred and delicate things; and when too powerfully worked upon, it issues (I am persuaded) in harm. Had I been in your place, I should have had nothing special in the readings and hymns of the day. You have the hearts of your children: it is better *not* to have their tears and sobs. And now, dear Mrs ——, I must tell you once again, how much I have felt the value of your truly devoted services. You have watched as with a Christian mother's love over the souls of those dear children. . . . It is with a very deep pang that I part with you. But our friendship will not cease. And now most fervently do I commit you to God, and to the word of His grace, that He may be your strength and support.

It may be in place here to adduce the testimony of one who knew him well, with regard to the treatment of children's feelings, especially on religious subjects. "All that fell from him on this subject showed much largeness of mind and freedom from the narrow, and, as it were, *stereotyped* system of religious education which one is tired of meeting with.... He felt the importance of children's minds not being often disturbed; and would say that if God's Spirit were in truth working within them, they would be sure to open their hearts to some one, who lived a religious life before them, and showed a willingness to talk on the subject whenever it came up naturally. I think he would have shrunk from those startling appeals to the conscience which it is the practice

of some to make, in order to awaken it. He liked religious truth to be put before children in a bright and cheerful light; and though he would solemnly warn them of the danger they were exposed to from sin and Satan, he loved particularly to dwell upon the joy and happiness and constant cheerfulness always present in a heart given entirely to God, and a life devoted to His service. And his own cheerful winning way of saying this could not fail to convince them how much he felt every word he said; and how truly his holy life was the foundation of his own peace and happiness. I remember his mentioning with great pleasure to me one day a new thought connected with the minds of children, which he had met with in some sermons he was reading, and which had evidently much interested him; he said the author had remarked, that in the young, religious feeling manifested itself mainly in the freshness and susceptibility of the *moral* perceptions; that the *devotional* spirit came later in the Christian's life*. He dwelt, I remember, on this remark, with great delight and interest."

The Sunday-schools at St Stephen's were taught by twelve ladies, volunteers, from his congregation: his own experience having confirmed the conclusion which most clergymen arrive at, that boys are managed better by ladies than by teachers of their own sex. "With reference to the Sunday-school," writes Mr Olivier, "he felt that the children's minds were occupied so long a time, that they must be thoroughly wearied; and that the effect of this would be to render what ought to be a happy day to them, tedious and

* See *Sermons on School Life*, by T. Burbidge, LL.D. Published by J. H. Parker, 1854.

oppressive. He, therefore, only allowed the *elder* classes in both schools to go to Church in the morning for the regular service; leaving the younger children in the care of the master and mistress, and allowing them to take a walk during service time. He had an opening service, consisting of the Litany and a short Address, at nine o'clock; to which all children were invited, but not obliged to come. It was found, however, that this plan did not work well, and it was accordingly given up. All the children in both schools attended Church in the afternoon. He endeavoured to keep up a spirit of union among the Sunday-school teachers, and to give them encouragement and help in their work, by means of meetings on the second and fourth Saturdays in each month. At these meetings, prayer was made for a continual blessing on their work; and a portion of Scripture read and explained in such a manner as that the teachers of the elder as well as the younger classes might gain some hints for instructing their pupils. The same portion of Scripture was read in all the classes; and in order that there might be a unity of design in the whole system, he went regularly through the life of our Lord, under the guidance of Greswell's *Harmonia Evangelica*."

An extract from one of his sermons will be felt to be appropriate here, as showing the spirit which he inculcated on his Sunday-school teachers:

> This solemn view of our work, of its difficulty and responsibility, need not and ought not to make us settle into a melancholy spirit. Such a spirit does not glorify God, or exercise any winning influence on the minds of children. Childhood is bright and cheerful; `rfulness that wins the heart of children. The

teacher may weep in secret; may pour out her spirit in prayer for her class: but she must cast her burden on the Lord; must maintain a cheerful spirit. The tear of heartfelt love may stand in your eye, when you sit surrounded by your class; but it must not be the tear of gloom or downcast melancholy. You must hope in God. His promises must cheer your heart; and then your manner will be loving, hopeful, and winning. It may be, that some may find it perplexing to understand how this twofold feeling can exist in the heart at the same time. Yet it is certain that it may and ought to exist. . . . The right spirit for a Sunday-school teacher we take to be a compound of these two feelings, which the spirit of God produces in the heart,—sorrow and joy. Realise the value of the souls of the children; realise the dangers to which they are, and will be, exposed; and these thoughts can scarcely fail to urge you into your secret chamber for prayer, fervent prayer for them. Yes, pray for them daily. Never enter into your class without having your heart prepared by prayer, as well as your mind prepared by study. Then in the truest sense you will sow in tears. And yet with all this you will not be melancholy. Peace will reign in your heart, even the peace of Jesus. You will feel more and more the privilege and joy of sowing, because you are Christ's, and in Him pardoned and reconciled to God. You will sow in hope, as well as in tears, because the promises of God are sure.

He did not himself teach in the Sunday-schools; but he always attended to open them with prayer, "punctual to the moment; and his presence and bright smile always animated and encouraged the teachers in their work."

5. Besides the National and Sunday Schools, which formed part of the machinery of his parish or district, there were several independent schools,

included within it locally, and supplying members of his congregation; which he regarded accordingly as an important part of his charge, in as far as he was invited or permitted to exercise influence over them.

First of these, as being a public institution, may be mentioned the Diocesan Training School for Servants; which, being within his district, was visited by him once a week, on which occasion he delivered a lecture to the girls; a weekly visit which was always looked forward to by the pupils with the highest pleasure. The lady who was chiefly concerned in the management and supervision of this institution, speaks gratefully of the encouragement and assistance she received from him, at various times, under anxiety and almost in despondency. "At one time," she adds, "the school was in considerable pecuniary difficulties; and he kindly undertook the office of treasurer; and having looked over the somewhat confused accounts, was the first person to put them on a better footing, and suggested a better arrangement. When the yearly deficiency, combined with higher prices, placed the affairs in serious embarrassment, and the plan of raising funds for the purchase of a house was first brought forward, he warmly seconded it, and was a most liberal contributor."

The greater number of schools, however, locally connected with him, belonged to the upper classes, and were under private management. In these, too, he warmly interested himself; and though he could not give them much of his time, yet he was always glad to be useful as far as he was able; and made arrangements, out of consideration for [illegible] in the services of his church. It was for

their benefit, more especially, that the catechising was held every alternate Friday, and the children's sermon preached on the first Sunday in each month. Three or four schools attended regularly on these occasions.

The catechetical instruction on Friday seems to have been more particularly adapted to the elder pupils of these schools; and, indeed, to have been made profitable, not only to those who were ostensibly the subject of it, but to such persons also of mature age as were induced to attend. He used to select some topic of wide and general interest. Nearly two years, for instance, were occupied by his Catechetical Lectures on the Articles of our Church, showing how fully these agreed with the teaching of Scripture on the several points embraced by them. His great desire and object in these lectures was to instruct and interest his young hearers in the careful and minute examination of the Scriptures; and he brought them skilfully and agreeably to the result which he had in view, by leading them, when difficulties occurred, through a scale of questions, ascending almost imperceptibly to the conclusion which at first seemed hopelessly distant. The lectures were accordingly very attractive to those for whom they were intended. A lady who was at the head of one of these schools, remarks that "her pupils would at all times rather lose any pleasure than what they used to call an Article service." Another of these courses, on which he was engaged when obliged to give up his work at Brighton, was on the subject of the Litany. For these lectures he made careful and copious preparations beforehand, though, for the sake of greater freedom in their delivery, he seems gene-

rally to have dispensed with his notes when in church. "It was chiefly in his catechetical instruction," says Mr Olivier, "that his wonderful knowledge of Scripture was exhibited. He was going through the Litany when he was called away from Brighton. He would enlarge upon each expression, referring to numerous texts in proof of all that he said; leaving it to the catechumens to find the verse upon his naming the chapter. He would do this without any assistance from notes; and as the number of passages referred to was very great, I have been astonished at his most intimate acquaintance with every portion of God's word."

On the first Sunday of each month, as has been stated, he preached a sermon in the afternoon addressed especially to children. The plan was borrowed from his friend Mr Vaughan; whose skill and success in interesting children by his mode of religious instruction had long been a matter of great admiration with him; and whose practice he now continued to imitate at Brighton, as he had done at Dallington before. As his little works on *Children's Thoughts, Children's Wishes,* and *Sermons for Children,** have been for some time before the public, it will perhaps be unnecessary to speak of these Sermons at any length here. Criticism upon them would proceed better from those who are more peculiarly qualified to judge of them, and who have witnessed their practical effects. These were the only publications on which he ever ventured in his lifetime; so humble an estimate did he form of his own intellectual powers and spiritual attainments. In contrasting these little books with the rare

* All published by Treacher and Co.

excellencies of the mind which produced them, and the range of the influence which he exercised over those who knew him, it seems as though now we heard a voice saying to him, "Friend, go up higher."

After these monthly sermons it was his custom to give out some Scriptural subject, on which he requested the children of his congregation to write down for his inspection the result of their thoughts and researches. The books in which these little essays were written were collected, and sent in to him, by the heads of the several schools which were connected with St Stephen's; and when he visited these schools in rotation, which it was his practice to do once every month, he brought the books with him (having previously looked them over) and commented on their contents in his interviews with the children. These periodical visits of his were looked forward to with much interest and pleasure. A few little anecdotes will show his kind and judicious mode of dealing with the children. One day it was remarked to him, before the assembled school, when he came on his monthly visit, that some one "had been very unkind." He looked grave, and said, "We will say, *unwise; not* unkind." At another time, when he was returning the "children's subjects," he said to one, "This paper is very nicely done; there is a great deal of research in it, which is very profitable;" and then, looking at another, with a reproving smile, he added, "Better than putting down whatever comes into our heads first." On one occasion, when a very little girl had been writing on "Children's Sorrows," and at the end of her subject, said, "I have have been looking much for more sorrows, but

can find nothing but blessings," he expressed himself much pleased, and said, "We should all find this to be more the case, if we received as little children." On another occasion he had given them the Joys of Heaven to write upon; and when he brought back the subjects, he remarked to the mistress on the difference they showed in the character of the children's minds. One very little girl thought especially of the *rest* of Heaven. "Then," said he, "I suppose you are sometimes very tired." He then told them of three eminent men who had each a different idea of the joys of Heaven. "One thought it would be *peace;* a second *joy;* but the third (Wilberforce) believed it would be all *love;* and there is one among you," he added, looking round upon the children, "who thinks it will be all love."

"I was once much pleased," continues the lady by whom some of these anecdotes have been supplied, "when he returned the papers, by his saying that one amongst them was so good that he had read it to his mother, as he was driving with her in a fly. This we thought the highest praise, as no one had so large a place in his estimation as his own mother."

Such were his periodical visits to the schools; but if any special occasion arose,—if the teachers were in difficulty, and required his help or advice, —if any of the pupils were in distress, or needing peculiar attention and management,—his sympathy was always ready, his time always at their service. Instances of this kind are remembered with gratitude, when he would come weekly, and even daily, to the school; and it would have been hard indeed to find a minister whose experience

and judgment, and patient, loving spirit, made counsel so truly wise, and assistance so fully efficacious.

6. Closely connected with these two last divisions of ministerial work, was the preparation of candidates for Confirmation. Nothing was said upon this point in the account of his ministry at Dallington; as the plan which he adopted there and at Brighton was nearly the same; and it seemed best to detail it once for all, when engaged with the larger field of labour.

There was nothing, it may well be believed, which interested him more intensely than this, or into which he threw himself with more entire devotion both of mind and of spirit. "Of all the interesting works of the Christian ministry," he says himself, "I have found none so interesting, so solemn, and so blessed to my own soul as instructing the young for Confirmation." He knew that it was a great crisis in the life of the recipients; which, though there was a dark side to the prospect, should be met with thankfulness and hopefulness by the ministers of Christ; and which, with God's blessing on their labours and prayers, would prove a seed-time more abundant in its effects than any other which called for their exertions.

The rite of Confirmation was administered nearly every year at Brighton, though at uncertain intervals; and as soon as the Bishop had given notice of his intention, George Wagner lost no time in making his arrangements for collecting and instructing the candidates, seeking them out from house to house. When the names had been sent in, of those who offered themselves for the purpose, keeping separate the candidates of either

sex, he proceeded to subdivide them into two classes severally, according to distinctions of education and social position: and thus four classes were formed for the purpose of instruction. This would generally be about two months before the Bishop's visit; and during that time, the course of teaching which has been described in the preceding sections was necessarily suspended, to make time for the more urgent duties to which he now devoted himself.

Besides lectures, delivered twice a week to each of his four classes, he gave each candidate (at least of the educated sort) two papers of questions, to be answered in writing, which he looked over and commented on separately. During and after the lectures, he saw each of the candidates separately; often giving much time to one individual case; carefully examined them, exhorted and prayed with them; and so arranged the work with his curate, that each of the less educated candidates should have at least two private interviews with the minister. "We used to call upon the educated candidates at their own homes or schools," says Mr Clarke, "to save their time, and to give the parents or guardians an opportunity, if they wished it, of being present; but we generally used to see each of the candidates alone. Mr Wagner's idea was partly to give them an opportunity of asking us questions, or communicating any thoughts to us about themselves, if they wished so to do; unburthening their minds to us as their pastors, if they pleased. On these occasions, we were careful to be passive, letting their communications be as free and voluntary as possible, not solicited by us: letting them know that unless they wished it, they need not communicate anything. We used

to find them more open to us than we expected. At each occasion of a Confirmation, there were several of either sex and class who used the opportunity; and we were struck with the good which appeared to result from these communications. Sometimes they were made to us in writing. It led the candidates to view religion more as a living, personal thing; and it brought before us many scruples, perplexities, and heavy burdens, of the existence of which we should otherwise have been ignorant, but which appeared to be acting as real hindrances to them on their heavenward road. It gave us opportunities, such as we could not otherwise have had, of opening and applying the word of God to their particular needs; and the power of this simple personal application of Scripture used to astonish us."

"Where there was any doubt of the fitness of the candidates," adds Mr Olivier, "he would see them again and again; and if convinced of their unfitness, either through ignorance or indifference, he kindly advised their deferring Confirmation, in such a manner as not to discourage....One great source of enjoyment to him on these occasions was the almost constant communion which he held with God, when praying with and for the candidates. He said on one occasion that he had never passed a happier day, having been in prayer with thirty different persons. Prayer, indeed, was his delight, the secret of his energy, and of the success which attended his efforts."

From his letters it appears that he was sometimes engaged for seven or eight hours a day, with these Confirmation candidates: and though much of his work had of course to give way accordingly, yet there were always urgent cases of sickness

to be attended to besides, necessary details of business, and the preparation which he never intermitted for his pulpit ministrations on Sunday and on Wednesday. Yet he was so happy during the time, as scarcely to seem conscious of his great exertions. A parishioner met him at the house of a friend, one year, on the evening of the day of the Confirmation; and congratulated him upon that work being over. He replied, with a glowing animated countenance, "I never enjoyed any time more. I wish it were all to begin again to-morrow."

Such care and faithful labour were not bestowed in vain. The devout and sincere were encouraged and edified; the careless and thoughtless roused to a sense of the solemnity of the step which they were contemplating. "We generally noticed," writes Mr Clarke, "that about one-sixth of the candidates used to condemn themselves, and withdraw in the course of the lectures. Of those that were confirmed, about two-thirds would volunteer to become communicants. The results of these Confirmations were, for the most part, more marked and positive than we looked for: some falling away, and sinking lower than ever before: but the large majority, I think I may say with thankfulness, rising and mounting, growing in grace and in holy watchfulness, in habits of prayer and attention to ordinances. It was no unfrequent occurrence after these seasons, to hear heads of families observe that their servants who had been confirmed, had become much better servants in every way; and to hear heads of schools remark that their pupils who had been confirmed, had grown so free from trifling, improving in diligence and thoughtfulness, their tempers becoming sweetened, gentleness increasing, their whole demeanour

telling of a higher and happier tone of mind. Who can tell how much these young people owed to the persevering prayers of their now glorified pastor!"

"The young people whom he prepared for Confirmation," writes a lady whose authority has been quoted more than once before, "retain an especial affection for him. One was really ill from grief, when she heard of his death. Abundant were the tears shed by all: it was like the sorrow for a near relation."

7. Except at the time of Confirmation, George Wagner, like all other clergymen, found it a peculiarly difficult thing to get any hold of the young men of his district. This class of the community, including those who in fact are boys, is the class of all others over which the ministers of religion always find it the hardest to obtain influence; and more especially amongst the lower and even the middle ranks of society. Local circumstances sometimes favour the effort; and by a wise use of opportunities presented to him, a clergyman is occasionally enabled to carry on his measures in this quarter with singular success. Wagner himself had been an example of this at Dallington, some of the most remarkable results of his ministry having been obtained amongst the young men of the parish. But the district of St Stephen's presented no such advantages; there was no natural or necessary bond between the population of a few streets arbitrarily divided from the neighbourhood; any attempt to organize the young men of the place for purposes of intellectual or moral improvement, must have been planned, to have a good prospect of success, on a much more comprehensive scale. There is little, therefore, to tell of

George Wagner's ministerial operations among this important class of his people. Nevertheless, he did not content himself without making several noble, and in some measure effectual attempts to reach them. He made an effort to induce the young men in the district to meet together for instruction; and opened Evening Classes for the purpose. His curate, Mr Clarke, took a leading part in conducting these Classes; but the principal teacher was the Dallington schoolmaster, who (as we saw) had followed his old pastor to Brighton. The effort did not succeed; a few only of the pupils, those who were more intelligent and better taught than the rest, continuing their attendance; while the more ignorant, and those who needed instruction most, soon fell away when they perceived that knowledge was not a thing that could be poured into them, but required exertion on the part of the recipient. After his schools were built, he determined to revive the attempt on a larger scale; but this involved the necessity of securing the assistance of a body of volunteer teachers—a matter of great difficulty to accomplish; and before he could effect his purpose, his failing health compelled him to give up his work at Brighton altogether.

With the same view, though comprehending a larger body whom he also hoped to benefit, he set on foot a Working Men's Reading Room, to be held at these Schools. "One of the Schoolrooms was opened, and warmed, and lighted up for about two hours every evening, for the use of the subscribers: and provided with a variety of the best current literature and periodicals of the day, including the *Times* newspaper. Coffee was also provided at cost price." Lectures also were delivered from time to time during the winter, mostly on

scientific subjects, by some able Lecturer, generally a layman; the Clergyman himself, as president, always attending, and making such remarks upon the Lecture and proceedings as he judged to be at once appropriate and likely to be useful. "The first Lecture," says Mr Olivier, "delivered in the first week of December, 1855, was well attended (as indeed all of them were, and not least by the poor); and a good number enrolled their names as subscribers. The men established a Committee among themselves, for the self-government (in part) of the Association: and at first there was some hope of the thing succeeding. But with its novelty, the interest wore off; and before the close of the first year, the Association may be said to have died a natural death.

8. More cheering in its immediate success, and more congenial to his own mind in the nature of its work, though perhaps of less importance in the results that might have been obtained, was his Female Servants' Bible Class. Knowing the temptations and the discouragements to which many of these poor girls are exposed, especially those who are employed in Lodging-houses, and the few opportunities they often enjoy for religious worship, he determined to form a class, held on Wednesday evenings, to which he invited such as could obtain leave to attend; trusting that they would be comforted and strengthened by the instruction they would receive, and the prayers in which they would join; that a bond of sympathy might be created between them; and that each and all might be cheered by the feeling that they had in their minister one who especially cared for them, and was ever ready to be their friend. It need hardly be said, however, that he was glad

to receive, and include in his class, those servants also whom he knew to be thoroughly watched and cared for by their employers; and whose tone and example, he might therefore hope, would be an important advantage to the others. The following account of the meetings of this Class is kindly furnished by a lady who was particularly connected with it.

"Nothing I can say can give the least idea of the deep interest that he took in the class, or of the grateful affection with which the servants all looked up to him. At first they used to assemble in his room; but the number increased so much, that they afterwards met in the church. I think that nearly thirty used generally to attend. They began with *silent* prayer: and then sang a hymn, which I believe they selected themselves. Then he explained a part of the Church Service, telling them the chapters in which to find the verses proving the different parts. After this, he gave them back the papers which they had given him to correct at the last meeting. [These were papers written upon a subject proposed by himself, consisting chiefly of illustrative verses of Scripture transcribed from chapters which he had indicated for their guidance.] The class ended with another hymn: and then he prayed; one of his petitions always being, that, if they did not meet again on earth, they might do so around the throne of their Father in Heaven. This, I think, struck them very much. The Service generally occupied a little more than an hour. But, I think, the great peculiarity of all his classes, and perhaps of this especially, was the individual interest which he took in them; and the influence which he gained over each of the members. When they had not

prepared the papers for him, he used never to blame them; but, as one of the servants said, 'looked so sorry, that it was enough to make us do them in future.' He made them feel so entirely that he was their friend, and that they might come to him in any trouble or difficulty; and encouraged them to ask him questions on any passage of Scripture, which they could not understand. Very often they availed themselves of this privilege, for they 'felt that they could tell him anything.'"

The following extracts from a letter, written by one of the members of this Servants' Class, will be read with peculiar interest.

"I cannot find words to express my thankfulness to God, for bringing me under the instruction of such a holy man as Mr Wagner was. I felt it to be a great trial to leave Brighton, and all its precious privileges....When our class is mentioned in the Memoir, oh! please let Mr Wagner's earnest desire and ministerial labours for our souls, his true kindness and meekness, be particularly spoken of...Could you have been present on our class evenings, and have heard his kind teaching, and his earnest prayers, so earnest for us, that none of us may be found wanting, I am sure you would never forget them. I feel that those prayers will yet be answered in many of his class. His instructions come more and more into my mind every day. I feel it was a precious privilege to attend them; and I believe we all felt it to be so....I have several times been round the houses of the members of the class, collecting for different objects, and it was a great pleasure to see how gladly they all gave what they could; so much so that once I had to return some money; we had too much:

and all seemed so grateful for his kind teaching. I have had a letter from one that had attended the class, but was then living in London: she was in distress when she wrote; but, she said, she had been taught at the class where to look for help, and she seemed to feel it such a comfort. Another of the members had to endure great persecution from those she lived with, for coming to the class; but she felt what a blessing it was, and came through all. I could tell you many such instances....We shall never know, till the Last Day, the blessing that attended Mr Wagner's faithful teaching at the class."

9. Even in those departments of his work which have been already described, it has been seen that he did not confine himself closely to the limits of his own district. And there were plans and efforts which it is now time to notice, the field of which was necessarily a wider one. Indeed, as Mr Olivier observes, "he was always looking out for fresh objects of care and affection; and his great desire was towards those who appeared to be neglected. This led him, very shortly after I was associated with him, to endeavour to do something for the Militia, who were at that time thronging the streets in dangerous idleness, and becoming thoroughly contaminated, through the temptations by which they were surrounded. We met for prayer and consultation upon this matter; and he gave me a bundle of 'good rousing tracts,' as he termed them; urging me to give them where I could, and to look for opportunities of speaking to the men." There can be no doubt that whatever he urged upon his fellow-labourers, he practised in still fuller measure himself; yet, still, it does not appear that any actual system of

ministrations was organized by him for the removal of the evils which he had thus noticed and deplored. But the same thing cannot be said of his efforts in favour of another neglected class of men, in whom he deeply interested himself, and his care for whom constitutes one of the most remarkable and touching passages of his ministerial life—the German musicians; a class, whose condition, and whose very existence, might well escape the observation of a clergyman in a populous town. "The way in which his mind was first directed to this object," writes one who assisted him loyally in this labour of love, "is worth relating, as showing his fear lest he should neglect to avail himself of any, the least, opening for doing good. He was calling one day on a poor woman, when he heard that a foreigner was lying up-stairs, apparently dying, and in great distress of mind. He was by his bedside directly; and he told me he should never forget the man's look of delight, when, on finding that he was a German, he addressed him in the tones of his Fatherland. He visited him often; and from this occurrence, and all he learned from the man, as to the uncared-for condition of his fellow-countrymen in the town, an earnest desire was awakened within him, to endeavour to find some remedy. Though he had already as much to do on Sunday as his strength was capable of, he determined to have a German service at eight o'clock in the evening. He went round to several of the musicians whom he knew, and the first evening only twelve assembled. But he was amply satisfied, as it was a beginning; and he hoped, when once the service was established, to obtain a German pastor for the work. The number soon increased; and forty

men and women were constantly in attendance. For the children of these people, also, he formed a class, taught by a German lady. I remember seeing him a few days after his first German sermon, and inquired how he had managed. He replied that it was the first time he had ever attempted such a thing; that it was certainly rather a trial; but that he had resolved to go neither in his own strength, nor with his own words. He said, he had committed himself in faith to God; and that on no occasion in his life had he remembered such an experience of help from above. The service was very simple; prayer, reading the Scriptures, singing*, and a plain unwritten exposition of some portion of the Bible. This service took more work out of him than anything else; partly because it came at the close of a day already sufficiently fatiguing. And those among his flock, who knew his varied labours, and watched with sorrow his increasing feebleness, urged him to give it up. This, however, he would not do, until he could find some one willing to undertake it. I mentioned to him a gentleman thoroughly fitted for such a service; and in reply to my information that this gentleman was also willing to undertake it, he says:—

'My work is so increased, that I could not, I fear, without injury to my health, continue much longer the German Service, which always tires me more than any. And now, I trust, it has pleased God to raise up another instrument. I feel more and more the importance of the division of labour; and until all the members of Christ give out in work what they receive

* He used for the purpose some of the Hymns of Baron Bunsen's Gesangbuch; and also a selection from the prayers of the Gebetbuch, printed in the same volume.

from their Head, the calling of the Church in the world will not be fulfilled; and while some live in ease, others will enter before their time upon their eternal rest.'

"These last words were only too prophetic of his own case."

10. And now it would be necessary to speak of the great work of all—the one which, above all other earthly objects, engrossed his thoughts, and called forth all the faculties of his mind and spirit, during the last three years of his life—the origination and establishment of the Brighton Home for Female Penitents. But this is so large and so important a subject, that it claims a chapter for itself, and must be reserved for separate treatment. Only while we are thus passing in review the several departments of his labours at Brighton, let it not be forgotten that, in addition to all the multitudinous occupations which have just been described, there is one which has yet to be reviewed; a work requiring faith, hopefulness, delicacy, judgment, perseverance, charity, to a degree surpassing all besides; yet which (though devoting his time and his energies to it largely and earnestly, under the persuasion that he was specially called to it by God) he never allowed to diminish his interest in his parochial cure, or to dim the brightness of his spirit, when engaged in the more ordinary duties of his calling. It is a common objection urged against such undertakings—a common complaint made of those who devote themselves to them—that an exclusive and morbid interest is thus formed in behalf of the fallen members of society, tending not only to the neglect of those who better deserve assistance and encouragement,

but to the absolute depreciation of the latter below the former. There may possibly have been just cause for such complaints in some similar instances of Christian philanthropy; but such certainly was not the case with George Wagner. Coincident with his ardent desire and steadfast resolution, to seek out and help the fallen, was the feeling of the duty that was owed by the Church to such as yet "stood upright." The intense and painful interest with which he contemplated the degraded, added strength to the tender sympathy with which he regarded those who could claim respect as well. It has been seen how this feeling showed itself towards the class of Servants. There was another class whom he equally desired to benefit—the young dressmakers and shopwomen of Brighton; many of whom were far distant from their parents and friends; and for whom, even when they had kind and considerate employers, he felt it would be a great advantage to provide a Christian friend and counsellor in time of need, as well as an organized system of instruction and mutual encouragement. With this view accordingly he formed a plan, which he also partially executed. One of the assistants whose services he secured, thus speaks of it.

"For the object he had in view, he suggested the formation of Sunday Bible Classes for these young women; and in this idea he contemplated not merely religious teaching, but that by means of these weekly meetings a tie might be formed between the lady undertaking such a class, and those who joined it; a tie which should lead them to feel that they had a friend, to whom they could at any time apply, either for advice or sympathy, and who should be ever ready to enter into their

difficulties and to help them. I well remember his first mentioning the subject to me, and the earnestness which he showed about it. He asked me to undertake one such class; but I hesitated, knowing how little I should come up to his standard of what such an office would require. He begged me to consider it well, and then to tell him my decision. This was shortly before separating for the summer holidays. On our meeting again in the autumn, almost his first question was, 'Have you thought about the class?' All he said showed that, during the weeks which had elapsed, his interest in the matter had acquired further strength. And here I may say, that I never knew any one who so entirely gave his whole mind to the subject which occupied him for the time. He had eminently the power of concentration; and this was one secret both of his own success in his ministerial work, and of the power he possessed of infusing his spirit into others. I promised to undertake a class; and he arranged to find my first pupils. He went round to several of the dressmakers and shops; and we soon made a beginning.

"He did not live to carry out completely his intentions as to these classes. What he desired was to have a *chain* (if I may so call it) of such gatherings throughout Brighton. Only three were actually formed, all in his own district; but I cannot doubt that, had his life been spared, they would have increased."

11. The position which George Wagner occupied, as the Minister of a District which had not a complete or separate parochial organization, if it brought some disadvantages with it, had, as we have seen, its compensations also. The dis-

advantage which he felt most at first, the want of separate week-day schools, was removed (as has been shown) by his own energy and perseverance; and the step thus gained would have led to other consequences also. The Evening Adult Classes which he contemplated, for instance, have been mentioned already, as well as the Working Men's Association, which he actually instituted; and it was his intention besides to have a separate Missionary Association for his District, with collectors drawn from his own congregation, and with quarterly and annual meetings to be held in the school, to keep up an intelligent interest in the subject. Indeed, he had already begun this with his school children, setting before them not only Foreign but Home Missions also, the great importance of which he had more fully appreciated since his removal to Brighton. He adopted the plan moreover (and intended to adopt it with adults) of trying to interest them in special individual cases, inducing two or more (for instance) to subscribe towards the maintenance of some particular child in a Reformatory School, or for the education of some child at the Missionary establishments abroad. Other plans also would have been suggested or facilitated by the possession of this convenient and ever available place of meeting. Meanwhile it was a great relief to him to be spared the amount of local and almost political business which would have devolved upon him in the case of a separate parochial cure; and he was able also to avoid that perpetual collision with Dissenters, which would have been peculiarly painful to one who mourned so deeply over the divisions of the Christian Church. As it was, he was able generally to keep aloof from antagonism

of this sort. He did not, indeed, escape the suspicious treatment, the cold repulses, and the arrogant assumption of spiritual superiority, which every Clergyman must expect to meet with, while endeavouring to help or counsel those who conceive themselves to be more enlightened than Churchmen; but he did not attempt to proselytize; and their treatment of him moved him little, as he did not feel bound (as he did at Dallington) to maintain his intercourse with all who lived within the limits assigned to his cure, at whatever cost to himself. For a town district is, in this respect, very different from a country village; where all the neighbours are necessarily acquainted with one another; and where the social evils and administrative difficulties, which spring from Dissent, are a continual embarrassment and pain to the active and conscientious Clergyman. In a large town such evils may show themselves more violently at vestries, and under political forms; but they interfere comparatively little with social and daily life.

"At Committee Meetings in his own district," says Mr Clarke, "he had a happy art of knowing when to express and when to withhold his opinion out of deference to others. Being very free from prejudice of any kind, his views were too expansive, and his feelings too well chastened and disciplined, to allow him to be dogmatical. This largeness of heart and mind, beautified by a delicate refinement and tact, combined to form one of the secrets of his influence."

In the public meetings and committees of Brighton, George Wagner seldom took part. His deafness was a great disadvantage to him on such occasions; and his low estimate of his own talents

would always have kept him in the background. He felt that he had no gifts for taking a leading part in such proceedings: and his inclinations, even more than his judgment, led him to abstain from them whenever it was possible for him to do so.

There seem to have been only two or three occasions, during his residence in Brighton, when he took anything like a leading part in public movements; constrained by a sense of duty, which over-weighed his own disinclination. One was at the time when the Sunday Question was much occupying people's minds. He felt very strongly about it; explaining his views on the subject to his congregation, and urging them especially to avoid increasing their servants' work by the employment of carriages in their attendance at church, a practice which he thankfully observed was an uncommon one at St Stephen's. His concern was especially excited for the cabmen: who seldom, if ever, enjoyed the advantage of their Sunday: and he used great exertions to have petitions drawn up; one for the signature of the cabmen, addressed to the fly-masters and stable-keepers; another from the inhabitants of Brighton, to the masters; and a third from the same, to the railway authorities. These petitions were all drawn up; but they got into the hands of a committee, which was established at the time, for the better observance of the Lord's day; and were consequently set aside, and nothing done. "And here," says Mr Olivier, "I may remark upon his strong dislike of committees. They only afforded people an opportunity, he thought, of talking a great deal; and almost invariably rendered action impossible. He never

was happier than when he found some one or two like-minded with himself, who would simply look at a difficulty, and at once make an attempt to overcome it."

Another occasion, on which his efforts were more successful, was that of the establishment of the Scripture Readers' Association in Brighton. "He had long been desirous to see one established, on Church of England principles. He had many obstacles to overcome, but he was not deterred; and his perseverance was at length rewarded, though it was not till after he had left Brighton that such an Association was really formed. Many of his friends were connected with an already existing society,—'The Town Mission;' to the principles of which he could not consent. He hoped, however, that a compromise might be effected; but his efforts in that direction were vain. Then, again, it was most difficult to frame a set of regulations, which would be acceptable to all who were most concerned in the measure: besides which, all did not see the evil which he hoped to remedy by this agency so clearly as he did; and were not, consequently, so earnest in the matter. A meeting was called: and he opened the subject by reading the following—'SKETCH OF A SCHEME FOR THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCRIPTURE READERS' ASSOCIATION IN BRIGHTON.'

'The Church of England has, through God's mercy, been conspicuous throughout Christendom for the energy of her Foreign Missions. A want has very long been felt by many, both of the Clergy and Laity of the Church, in this rapidly increasing town, of a *Home Mission:* which, while it should employ Laic agency, shall connect it with the Parochial system; a ma-

chinery which already exists, and which has proved an inestimable blessing to England: which, moreover, only needs development, to meet the increasing wants of our overgrown population in the cities and towns of this country.

'A committee has been formed in order to supply this want; and they now put forth a plan, which they have reason to believe will commend itself to the judgments and hearts of a large number of the Clergy and Laity: and they earnestly beg all those who approve of it to join them in this important movement. The plan is threefold.

'*First*, to provide and employ Scripture Readers, who shall labour amongst the lowest and most degraded portion of our population, under the superintendence and control of the Clergymen of the districts to which they shall be appointed.

'The *second* part of the plan is to provide a Clergyman, who shall be attached, as Curate, to that district which shall be found most to need such help; if his assistance shall be desired by the Incumbent of the district. It shall be his duty to visit, from house to house, in the most neglected parts of the District; to seek out those most deeply fallen, whether into infidelity or immorality; and to preach on Sundays, and during the week, in licensed School-rooms, as explained in the third part of the plan. He would assist the Incumbent, on the strict understanding that he should never officiate in his Church, or in any Church in Brighton; as this would inevitably draw him away from his own proper work.

'The *third* part of the plan is, either to alter existing houses, or to build (if need be) one or two Schools, to be licensed for public worship. These should be of the most simple and common description; situated in the worst localities; and adapted to the people living around them. Experience has proved that many will attend services conducted in such rooms, who never

enter a Church. Adult Classes might also be held in them by the Scripture Readers in the evenings of the week-days.'

"It is needless to follow the history of the discussions which ensued, and which resulted in the adoption of the *first* part only of his plan. As his manner was, he left others to talk; thankful that an interest was at length excited, in a matter which was so near to his own heart.

"Throughout the whole of the discussions it was most striking to see his great humility and patience. He gave up two-thirds of the scheme, which he had framed with the greatest care, and digested with extreme anxiety, without a word of objection: and any one, noticing the retiring position which he maintained, would never have supposed that he was the originator of the plan, and that it was only his quiet and indefatigable perseverance which had excited an interest in the matter."

One more such occasion remains to be spoken of, though perhaps the movement which he then influenced should hardly be called a *public* one. During the time of his residence at Brighton, certain practices, which had obtained among some of the clergy, had so strongly excited public opinion, that it became necessary, in the judgment of the great majority, to make some open and united declaration of their own sentiments on the point; and meetings were held accordingly at the house of one who felt very strongly on the subject. The declaration which resulted from these meetings, had the cordial assent and sympathy of George Wagner, though personal reasons made it very painful to him to join in it; but, "as the

whole tone of his mind was for *constructing*, rather than *destroying*, he used the opportunity of suggesting to the leader of the movement, that since the Clergy could meet for controversial purposes, they surely could do so for mutual edification. The gentleman in question caught at the idea, proposed it to the Clergy, and carried it out. It was one of those occasions on which George Wagner's suggestive mind started the idea; and then his humility led him at once to retire into the background; so that, probably, to the present day, the Brighton Clergy hardly know that he was the first mover in it." He believed others to be more capable than himself of maturing the plan; and the merit of doing so rests with them. These clerical meetings were to be held on the first Monday in each month, from eight to ten P.M.; their object being the promotion of brotherly intercourse among the Clergy of the town: and more immediately the discussion of subjects of common interest to all, whether theological or pastoral. Care was to be taken to pass no resolutions, and form no concerted plans, which would interfere with regular ecclesiastical subordination and discipline. Such meetings could hardly be otherwise than productive of good; and the younger Clergy especially speak with gratitude of the benefit they have derived from "these opportunities of meeting men of superior minds and Christian singleness of aim." George Wagner himself always attended these meetings, when he was able.

Another periodical meeting, also, of a similar nature, owed its origin more manifestly to the same suggestive mind; that of the schoolmasters of Brighton and its vicinity. During the last two

years of his ministry at St Stephen's, he had endeavoured to establish a Schoolmasters' Association in the town, similar to that which he had formed and sustained at Dallington. After some difficulty, he succeeded. The Association was constituted; and he presided over its first meeting, and at one or two others besides, before his final removal from Brighton. This too is one of the good works which remained behind him to attest the thoughtfulness and energy of their author.

Such was the influence he exercised, often almost imperceptibly, over a wider area than his own district; and such the gentle ways in which he won that influence. His character was known and respected everywhere in Brighton; even temporary visitors, such as cared to know anything of Church matters at all, knew him by name and reputation. And wherever his name was mentioned, it was with affectionate praise. Using general language, it is not too much to say, that the feeling in his favour was universal. And yet not quite so; according to those who knew Brighton most intimately, and the under-current of its society. "There were some who either could not understand a life which so evidently excelled their standard, leaving them far behind; or who, from jealousy of an example so high and disinterested, wilfully misunderstood his meaning; thus sparing him from coming under the Woe of those, of whom all men speak well."

And now the main features of his Brighton ministry have been briefly sketched—briefly, in comparison with the fulness of detail which might be supplied, and which marked those five years of various and unwearied labour. It was a life, indeed, of comprehensive plans, and yet of minute

watchfulness, which, if it be well considered, will appear almost incredible in a man of slight frame and weakly constitution; one not endowed, moreover, by nature with any remarkable powers of mind. To pass from case to case with equal sympathy and entire attention to all—to turn from one subject to another totally different, and find equal energy and freshness for each—to cheer, and sustain, and direct so many fellow-labourers, all looking to him for guidance, all so mainly dependent on his tone of mind and spirit—and this amidst the distractions, and interruptions, and surprises, and disappointments, and humiliations, which indeed constitute so many calls for new exertion in the faithful minister of Christ—this was work to which he would have been wholly unequal, had not a secret source of strength been continually his. To speak of natural causes, the secret was this; that his object, in all these plans and occupations, was *one and the same.* They were all (so to speak) lines radiating from a common centre; and at that centre his mind continually dwelt, ready at a moment's call to pursue the line which the occasion demanded, and then at once returning to the centre from which any other object of his ministry could as instantaneously be reached. It was this perfect singleness of aim, and the clearness it imparted to his mental as well as moral faculties, which made a few moments of his presence, or a few words from his mouth, so efficacious and so valuable to others, with so little apparent effort on his part. Hence it was that those about him found it such a pleasure to transact business with him, for his thoughts were all arranged and his plans prepared beforehand; hence it was that his District Visitors felt

that "his words alone were full of help. We hardly ever met him in the street, without feeling that it was a blessing and a comfort to carry away the few words that he had spoken." The secret lay in that pregnant declaration, "This *one* thing I do."

But that *one* thing was also the work of God: and hence a power from above rested upon him who pursued that work so singly. His strength was in his Christian faith; or rather it was in that Power, in which his faith had taken root, and from which it drew wisdom and courage and confidence, as well as holiness and inward peace. Who that carefully observed that character, so raised above all unworthy influences, so elevated above its natural level, in all its intellectual as well as moral development, could fail to be convinced that here was a living example of genuine Christian faith—and to be awakened, moreover, to the conviction (which is a thousand times more important,) that He, whom that faith apprehended, was manifesting there the reality of His own influence; was showing that, though hidden from the unenlightened heart, He is not far from every one of us?

But though thus sustained and tranquillised, the labours which we have been considering proved too heavy at last for one so little able to endure physical fatigue. The natural powers at length gave way, under a burden too heavy for them to bear. How this declared itself shall presently be told. It is necessary first to examine more minutely some parts of his ministry at Brighton, before we pass on to the joyful sorrow of a Christian's dying hours.

CHAPTER IV.

SERMONS. DOCTRINES, THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL.

PREACHING, even in its ordinary sense, not as the proclamation of truths unheard before, but as the application of those truths to the hearts and minds of professing Christians, held a very high place in the estimation of George Wagner. Though humble, even to a fault, in his judgment of his own Sermons, he yet prepared them and delivered them under a deep conviction that they were instruments ordained by God, and therefore capable of producing effects, not proportioned to their own intrinsic value, but to His condescending grace.

Composed in this spirit, and under this persuasion, there is no wonder that his sermons have an elevation and a force of thought of which even those who knew him well would hardly have judged him capable. They were at once the highest and the truest expression of all that filled his heart and mind; embodying the results of patient and devout study of Scripture; the fruits of practical wisdom gathered from keen observation, and comprehensive sympathy with men of every grade, amidst the duties of an active and beneficent life; and the treasures of a higher wisdom also, a wisdom won by prayer and self-sur-

render from the living Source of all Truth, a wisdom glowing with heavenly radiance, and disclosing secrets of unseen and eternal things which are only imparted to the pure in heart.

His sermons are very superior to his letters. He had not that graceful flexibility of mind which makes the transition seem easy and natural from personal concerns to higher subjects; and therefore his letters, for the most part, have something of the monotony of a fixed idea, when turning (as they invariably do) from the topics of earth to the prospects of eternity. But as a preacher, he stood on higher ground. Self was forgotten and laid aside. The affairs, and relations, and circumstances of earth, were contemplated from above—not neglected, not lost sight of, but viewed from the elevation which had then become appropriate and natural; and from which his spirit, without effort or embarrassment, could survey them in the aspect which was habitual to himself.

George Wagner was naturally no orator. He had none of the physical advantages which win favour above all else from the multitude, and which tell more than is creditable even with the few,—the advantages of voice, presence, animation of delivery, and that vigorous health which, flowing through heart and brain, suggests and sustains the feeling of self-reliance: nor had he in great measure those mental gifts which are generally connected with the foregoing—a lively fancy, a redundant fluency of words, and the quick sympathetic tact which enables a speaker to perceive and adapt himself to the rising emotions of his hearers. Hence public speaking was not the natural engine of his influence; and he judged, and rightly judged, that written sermons would be

more effective in his case than extemporary. Not that he could not preach and speak, when necessary, without preparation in writing; and this with good effect. No false shame or misplaced timidity deterred or embarrassed him when duty called. There was a propriety and dignity, and even an ease in his manner and words, when he saw need thus to speak, which won attention and respect from those whom he addressed; and this was very remarkable in his discourses to children, whom he won and kept entranced by the simplicity and tenderness of his manner, and the clearness of his language. Still, the power of public speaking was not one of his natural gifts. It was more congenial to himself, and more profitable (as he judged) to his people, to write the sermons which he prepared for their instruction. Nor did these sermons owe much of the effect they produced to their delivery; except from the impression, left upon the hearers, of the sincerity, and earnestness, and holiness of the preacher.

But though the most obvious requisites of oratorical power were not largely found in George Wagner, he possessed those qualities without which no orator ever was great, or deserving of the name, even for worldly purposes. Thorough conviction of the truth of what he spoke, unmixed singleness of aim, resolute stedfastness of purpose, intense sympathy with those whom he addressed, genuine fervency of spirit, entire devotedness to the cause which he was advocating,—these, the highest because the moral qualities of an orator, and the indispensable requisites of a true preacher, were found in no ordinary degree in this exemplary minister of Christ. And hence the word spoken was with power, as has been seen already in the ac-

count of his ministry. "For it is not our thoughts (as he himself says), clothed in eloquence, which are powerful to win souls; but the simple and faithful delivery of a message, which has been received into our hearts, and made their nourishment and their strength."

The intellectual or argumentative BASIS, on which his preaching rested, was twofold—the recognised fact of the depravity of man's nature, and the admitted authority of Scripture as the word of God. These two points are invariably assumed in his sermons; and on this basis his reasoning proceeds even when dealing avowedly with those who are still estranged in heart from God. Not that he was incompetent to lay his argumentative foundation deeper, had he been compelled to do so; but his was not a mind that craved such a foundation for its own conclusions; and it was evidently repugnant and distressing to his feelings, even to contemplate such a necessity. Conscience on the one hand—the sword of the Spirit on the other—these were the weapons which he loved to wield; and the edge of which he had proved for himself, before he essayed to grasp them; nor would he lay them aside for a moment in his public ministry, for the sake of advantages which might seem to offer themselves. If God did not bless the use of these, he at least would not venture to employ others. And they were weapons which, in truth, he well knew how to wield. Few understood better than he, how to drive home the sharp arrows of CONSCIENCE into the slumbering, or self-righteous, or presumptuous heart. Sin in its open and more assailable parts, and also in those which are less easy of detection, had long been narrowly watched and studied by him. He

had studied it in the best of schools, that of his own inward experience: he had watched and followed there, with relentless perseverance, the windings and workings of our fallen nature. And in using the knowledge which he had thus gained, he was undeterred by any fear of exposing or compromising himself. He had given himself wholly up to God. He had nothing on his own part to conceal, or gloss over, or justify; and hence he proceeded with an advantage, which nothing else could give, to attack, in God's name, the hearts of others. He was assured, that the nature of those whom he addressed was substantially like his own; and that the secrets which he had learned by his own experience, had their counterpart in them. And he was persuaded, too, that God had there also a faithful and indefectible ally—one whose responsive voice would confirm the accusations, and acknowledge the summons of his Master.

And so, too, it was with his use of SCRIPTURE. It is too weak an expression, to say that he was fully persuaded of the truth and divine authority of the Bible. He *knew* that it was from God. And therefore he used it with a confidence and boldness, which waited not to look around for argument in its support. It would vindicate its own authority. Its declarations, its judgments, its threats, its promises, would be read in the light which itself created. Wherever truth could find an entrance at all, there, by the very virtue of its nature and its origin, God's word would penetrate. His knowledge of Scripture was most extensive and most minute. He had studied it with a zeal, an attention, and a love, which left no part unconsidered and unsearched. The most apposite passages readily occurred to his mind, whatever case

or subject was under discussion; and he had the power, in a remarkable degree, of bringing other passages to support and explain such texts as required elucidation. He loved to dwell on the consistency, the harmony, the oneness of God's word; while carefully noting, on the other hand, and intelligently appreciating the rich variety of its parts, and the wide diversity of character and circumstances which distinguished its several human authors. But he delighted still more to trace the progressive, though consistent, dealings of the Almighty with the race of man; the mysterious, yet unfailing, course of Providence, attended or preceded by its handmaid, Prophecy; the gradual development of Revelation; and the witness borne by all these things to the adorable Attributes of God.

But, above all else, he loved to dwell on the person and the work of the Divine REDEEMER. Christ was the lode-star of his own soul, to which (whatever topic he began upon) his thoughts were invariably, spontaneously, and necessarily drawn. Christ was the Sun in his firmament, without which all was cold and dark, but under whose rays all things were filled with life and beauty and joyousness. The one object and end of his ministry was to set forth Jesus Christ to others, as by faith he had been enabled to apprehend Him for himself, the centre, the foundation, and the crown of all hope and peace and blessedness. Who that received the Gospel into his heart could fail to find it so? That lowly human existence which was led centuries ago on the coast of Palestine, presenting to every thoughtful mind a beauty and a sweetness which no other record could equal,—what unutterable glory, what inexhausti-

ble meaning and power, did it possess for the believer! The Word made flesh to dwell among us—the express image of the Invisible revealed to men—the Lord visiting His people—God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself—breaking the power of evil—triumphing over sin and death—turning sorrow and desolation and temptation itself into wholesome and sanctifying discipline—what need of the human heart did this leave unprovided for? what craving unforeseen and unsatisfied? To himself it was all in all. Year by year, day by day, he had lived upon the Gospel, and proved it in his own experience to be the mighty power of God unto salvation. And he felt it to be an honour, a privilege, and a blessing, to which no other employment could offer any parallel, to be allowed and commissioned to set it forth to others.

He showed remarkable power of appreciating and drawing out the meaning of every particular in the life and character of the Saviour. Every smallest incident, every passing expression in the Gospel narrative, had a value and significance for him which disclosed itself more and more to his patient and devout meditation. Yet these were not far-fetched meanings, nor fanciful novelties, nor laboured and ingenious theories: but delicate and beautiful shades of the divine truth embodied in the words of Scripture; which commended themselves at once to the reason and judgment, when stated; though none would have noticed them but a deeply spiritual mind—a mind endued, through prayer and heavenly discipline, with that delicate perception which is at once a proof and a reward of growing conformity to the Redeemer. Hence there was a freshness, a pathos, and a

reality in his comments on the Gospel records, which was akin to the inspiration which produced them. Most especially, perhaps, was this seen in his treatment of the most solemn and sacred subject of all—the actions and the words of the Saviour at the close of His life on earth. The subject had a divine fascination for him, proportioned to its unspeakable importance. That hallowed ground was the very home of his heart. He loved to linger round it, and return to it again and again. Every footstep of the Saviour imprinted on it, every echo of His voice that had resounded there, was treasured up in his inmost memory, and was suggestive of some precious truth which nowhere else could be learned so fully. Perhaps no sermons dwelt so long and so vividly on the recollection of his people as those courses of lectures which year after year, when the holy season came round, he made it a rule to deliver daily in Passion Week—lectures on the successive events of those hallowed days—on the prophecies of Zechariah concerning them—on the 53rd chapter of Isaiah—on the prayer of the Lord recorded in the 17th chapter of St John—on the words uttered from the Cross.

For if it was Christ above all else that he preached, more especially did he point to HIM CRUCIFIED. The sacrifice by which sin was put away—the death which is the life of the redeemed—was necessarily the very crown of the work of Redemption; the most perfect manifestation of the love, and wisdom, and power of God. It was the keystone of his own hope—the final object of trust to which his preaching invariably pointed. Yet he never trusted himself to set forth systematically the philosophy of the atonement.

His method of approaching that awful subject was materially different from that which we too often witness.

We do not forget (he says) that it is easy to use bold language in speaking of the necessity of Christ's precious death: language from which reverent minds draw back. And yet there are questions which we *may* ask, if we only do so in a reverent and lowly spirit; and we may find the answer profitable to our souls. It is a fact that Jesus died for our sins. What wants in man,—and what attributes of God,—made so costly a sacrifice, and so much suffering, necessary?

And thus he would dwell at length on the lessons to be drawn from the Cross, and under it; the witness which it bears *against* man, and *for* God; he would enlarge with adoring thankfulness on the texts of Holy Writ, which proclaim its healing virtue and triumphant power; he would bring forward with loving minuteness the types and figures of the Jewish law, which foreshadow its nature and its effects: but, while accepting also the usual phraseology which is current among evangelical Christians respecting it, he would never allow himself to be confined to a system. He felt that there was something unfathomable in the sufferings of Christ in their aspect towards the Father. Believers must, after all, be like the people on the day of atonement, standing on the outside; while their great High Priest passes within the veil, alone and unwitnessed to offer the prevailing sacrifice. For:—

As St Paul, speaking of the riches of Christ, calls them *unsearchable;* and, of the love of Christ, says that *it passeth knowledge;* so may we, and must we say of the travail of the Saviour's soul, that it is as unsearchable as the one, and passeth knowledge as the other.

While embracing a large doctrinal range in the topics of his discourses, he was eminently a PRACTICAL preacher; calling for the fruits of faith in those who professed to have it; and urging upon all, that the ultimate object of the Gospel was to produce holiness; that Christians were delivered from condemnation and the power of the Enemy, that they might be conformed to the image of their Redeemer, and that they might be prepared, by a discipline of sanctification here, for that eternal state where the necessary condition of blessedness is likeness to their Lord. Accordingly, it was his constant and earnest endeavour, to apply the principles of the Gospel to the circumstances of modern society; to point out the snares, to protest against the inconsistencies, to enforce the responsibilities and duties, arising from the state of things amongst which his hearers lived. He spoke plainly and strongly of the sins of worldliness and luxury; he exposed, with unsparing severity, the hatefulness in God's sight of a formal and pharisaical self-righteousness; he drew out and recommended, with manly wisdom and exquisite delicacy of feeling, the path of unobtrusive Christian consistency which still lay open for every one amidst the daily occupations and relationships of life. Yet how different all this from what is too often esteemed and required as practical preaching—the setting up of a standard which is coldly praised by the hearers; and theoretically constructed, for the most part, by him who proposes it for imitation! He never forgot—his own self-questioning heart and his tender sympathy for others never allowed him to forget—that the great difficulty in the way of pure and high morality is the powerlessness of man to practise what his conscience approves; and

that if it be a preacher's duty to point out the path which must be walked in, far more is it his duty, and the prime necessity of the case, to show where the power so to live can be found. Here, then, he fell back upon his great and never-exhausted theme, the graciousness and willingness and mightiness to help of that unseen Redeemer whom he preached—the long-suffering and effectual presence and all-sufficient grace of that Holy Spirit who alone can change or sustain the heart. And while all who knew him were well aware how lovely his own example was, and with what singular consistency he practised what he strove to recommend; the heavenly peace and joy which shone forth in all his words and looks, the more than earthly happiness which seemed to be his portion, made others long to find that secret source of blessedness which he had found; and won them to receive his testimony, as he pointed to the fountain whence he drew that living water.

To discriminate between different CLASSES of hearers is no less a part of a preacher's office, than to keep a just proportion in the points of doctrine which he selects. This also he must do, if he would "show himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." In this part of his work, too, the most difficult and delicate, because by its very nature the most personal, George Wagner fearlessly, though humbly, strove to discharge his duty; studying, even if he offended men, to be "approved unto God." One broad and leading distinction he never failed to insist upon; though one which was sure to rouse the dislike and opposition of many in every mixed congregation; and of several, among those many, whose thought-

fulness and judgment and other admirable qualities he could heartily appreciate. Yet, unless he was prepared to pronounce his own spiritual experience a delusion, and the sure persuasion of the holiest of Christian saints an enthusiast's dream—unless, moreover, he could consent to explain away whole passages of Scripture, which seemed written as with a sunbeam, and these the passages which most of all formed the charter of the Christian's consolations and hopes, he could not suppress the conviction,—or fail to announce it with the authority of a minister of God,—that there was a line, clear, distinct, and palpable, on one side or the other of which every human being stood. That line separated all besides, from those who through living faith and by the leading of the Holy Spirit had recognised the Head of their redeemed humanity, and "had been brought into vital union with Christ, experiencing His actual dominion in their hearts; who had consciously dedicated themselves to Him, and laid hold of the promises of the covenant."

But, joined with this conviction, and the solemn and touching declaration of it, was the persuasion also of other coincident truths; the absence, or comparative neglect of which has too often made the maintenance of this distinction a ministry of presumption to some, of dejection and despair to others.

Presumption never could arise from such teaching as his; never could coexist with the reception of that teaching. He knew, himself, what it was to be brought near to the All Holy One; to see his own character and spiritual prospects in the light that shines from above. He knew that self-abasement, and even self-abhorrence, were the

necessary consequences of a true apprehension of that spotless and perfect Mediator, in whose propitiatory sacrifice and ever-prevailing merits his own hope was wholly placed; that departure from iniquity, and earnest striving after righteousness, sprang necessarily from vital union between the Redeemer and the redeemed. He spoke upon this point, therefore, with a commanding authority, which drew its force at once from his own experience and from God's infallible word. And, under his preaching, the unhallowed confidence of the presumptuous quailed; and the hope of the hypocrite crumbled away; while the backslider, in whose heart a better principle had once prevailed, felt the power of that truth which tore aside his refuges of lies, and awoke to the conviction that his only hope was to "arise and go to his Father."

And so too, on the other hand, his was not a ministry of discouragement and despondency. He was not one of those, in whose eyes all men are on a level of badness, if they have not reached the point which yet he unwaveringly indicated. Two thoughts, corrective of such a fault, were continually before his mind. One was, that the spiritual life is necessarily a progressive one, and that the earlier stages of that progress are often far from promising. "Grace has its growth," he taught. "There is the infancy of faith, when it just touches the hem: and the manhood of faith, when it trusts in the dark, and gives glory to God. There is the dawn of hope, when it just anticipates the fulfilment of God's promises: and there is the assurance of hope, when, rising out of experience, it can ride unextinguished through the storm." And thus the timid, the doubtful,

the self-accusing, learned from him to follow the light, which did little as yet but make manifest their darkness; re-assured by the promise, and the hope, that it would yet prove to them the light of life. And children too, and those of child-like spirit, were assisted to trust in a loving and compassionate Father, who would lead them on, step by step, through gradations (it might be) almost imperceptible, to the full understanding and enjoyment of privileges which they could know but imperfectly as yet.

And furthermore, with respect to this progress, who shall pretend to trace its course?—who shall presume to lay down the path by which the human spirit must necessarily find its way to God? This too was a thought which dwelt within George Wagner's mind, repressing dogmatism, and reviving hopefulness; though seldom expressed in his sermons, nor developed perhaps with the breadth and fulness with which it has possessed the heart of some other Christian teachers. What endless variety of circumstances, what perplexities, contradictions, and anomalies, does human life contain! the clue to which, nevertheless, God keeps, and will unravel in the end. Many are those whose probation, by His own appointment, goes on under circumstances which we can neither trace nor understand. Many are following the secret guidance of the Holy Spirit, leading them by a path which they know not, through the rough ways of this wilderness-like world, to some bleak mountain-top, it may be; whence the view of the blessed land, which their Redeemer has purchased for them, shall burst at last on their adoring gaze! How widely at last will that redeeming grace, which has abounded much more than the abound-

ing curse of sin, enlarge those borders of His kingdom which now appear so circumscribed! And yet no less surely, *there* stands the line of circumscription, drawn by the Holy Spirit Himself, recognised with awful reverence by the spiritually minded. Oh, cross it, you who are still lingering in doubt and bondage: for below it, is no security of acceptance and salvation, no peace and joy in believing, no liberty of service, no assurance of adoption, no change into the blessed image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Nor yet, while thus recognising the richness and fulness of redeeming grace, was he checked by the apprehension of a barrier raised between any soul and its salvation by the ETERNAL DECREES of God. Deeply as he revered Calvin, and valued the writings of that great "Master in Israel," yet no man was more free from Calvinistic narrowness than George Wagner. Reverently and thankfully submitting himself to the impossibility of setting limits, either to the foreknowledge or the power of God, he yet saw plainly that the fallacy of the Calvinistic system resides in this—that it assumes the divine mind to be a boundless enlargement of a human mind, subject to the same laws and meted with the same measure. To reject this assumption is to free oneself at once from the logical meshes of that subtle theology. He had learned himself to attain this freedom in the school of Hare, and Erskine, and Alexander Scott. He saw that the Gospel released our struggling reason from its grapple with a mystery which is necessarily insoluble. It brings down the mind of God to our partial apprehension, by disclosing to us the mind of Christ. On that ground, and on that alone, is it possible to

draw conclusions from the analogy of humanity. And hence he could proclaim the Gospel of salvation in the words of the Saviour and of His inspired disciples, with the joyful certainty that those words were not ambiguous, not to be received in a doubtful and limited sense,—but free, and wide, and all-embracing, as they professed to be,—commissioning and compelling His ministers to address their message hopefully, as well as earnestly, to every man. His own intense desire for the salvation of his fellow-creatures, what was it but a faint and intermittent reflection of the mind of Christ? his own expostulations, and arguments, and entreaties, what were they but poor and weak endeavours to express the pleadings and convincing influences of the Holy Spirit of God? Hence, while discriminating and distinguishing in the most searching way between the various classes of his hearers, and describing their spiritual state,—the half-hearted, the doubtful, the careless, the worldly, the sensual, the slaves of sin and self,—he never cut himself off from tender sympathy with any. He felt, and showed he felt, that he had a thousand points of contact with them all; he knew that there were a thousand channels through which the Holy Spirit could work upon them, and perhaps was working even then, faintly it might be, and as yet unrecognised, but none the less really, and, as it might prove at last, efficaciously.

And yet there was one class always to be found (one should think) in every congregation of the educated and the thoughtful, and more numerous certainly than many suspect; a class who require and deserve, as much as any, the tender consideration of the ministers of Christ;

towards whom he evinced little sympathy, and to whom his ministrations were seldom (if ever) specially addressed; those who, while admiring and loving the Bible, and won in heart and affection by the beauty and sweetness of the Gospel, are yet tortured or sadly held back by doubts of its objective reality—doubts whether there be indeed a basis of unquestionable fact laid down by God Himself on which their souls might rest.

Such minds would receive little direct help or benefit from George Wagner's ministry. He showed no sympathy with them, and scarcely touched on such cases as possible in his ordinary preaching. He was so fully convinced of the sinfulness of unbelief, and the evil of the heart, from which it springs, that when he glanced at such a state of mind, it was only to arouse the conscience, and to deepen its sense of the *need* of a Purifier. There is a striking instance of this in his sermon on the doubt and unbelief of Thomas—a sermon as instructive and profitable as it is able and deeply considered, yet which stands in remarkable contrast with that of Arnold's (for instance) on the same subject; sternly contemplating the unfavourable side only, and seeking for the root of that unbelief in the unsanctified tendencies, and neglect of moral duty which he thought he could trace in the Apostle's character.

Not but that, if such persons had come to him in distress of mind, they would have found the tenderest sympathy, and much light and guidance in their difficulties. His heart was opened at once to all who were in temptation or perplexity; and they would have found in him also a fairness, a calmness, a knowledge of evidences, external and internal, of the Christian Faith, and above

all, a deep and unwavering conviction of the truth by which he lived, which could hardly have failed to help and reassure them. Still (as has been said), such sympathy was not spontaneous: the tone of his mind, and the character of his sermons, was not such as to lead the faith of such hearers to strike root downwards. He was not one who could point out the converging lines of hidden analogies; not one who could touch the chords of axiomatic truth, and show that they vibrated in harmony with the Voice of Revelation, —like his great master in thought and learning, Julius Hare; or like one, who was then preaching at Brighton those Sermons which have since been added to the treasures of the Christian Church, the gifted and noble-minded Frederick Robertson. Such power is granted to genius alone; and George Wagner was not a man of genius. It is only such as they, who can reach the foundations on which conviction rests; who can see the bearing and significance of simple and familiar facts; which we overlook, till they point them out to us, and teach us how they witness to the constitution of the universe.

As an EXPOSITOR of Scripture, George Wagner was one whom all his people could respect as a competent and trustworthy guide. His profound knowledge of every part of the Bible has been more than once mentioned already; together with that ready recollection, and fine sagacity, with which he could bring one part to illustrate another; but, in drawing out the true and unforced meaning of the particular passage which he desired to explain, his merits were no less remarkable. He was a sound and accurate Greek scholar; and his knowledge of Hebrew, though not exten-

sive, was sufficient at any rate to enable him to refer with pleasure and interest to the original text, and to appreciate the guidance of really qualified authorities: while his sound judgment, and patient conscientiousness, with an understanding well trained in processes of reasoning, and a heart attuned to the voice of inspiration, enabled him to apprehend and set forth the mind and spirit of many a passage which but for such investigations would be overlooked or misunderstood. He readily and gratefully recognised how much we owe to the Biblical critics of Germany, in developing the principles of a sound and consistent exegesis: and some of the German commentaries were his favourite and most effectual helps in his study of the sacred text. Yet his own habits of thought, in their excellencies as well as their defects, were thoroughly English. He never lost himself in speculation, or forgot the primary object of his researches amidst heaps of preparatory learning. Ever devout in his attitude of mind, practical in aim, terse in expression, he sought for nothing, and put nothing before his hearers, but the truth which it was his purpose and theirs to discover; receiving it when found "as the word of God, which effectually worketh also in them that believe."

This thoughtful, laborious, reverent investigation of the true meaning of Scripture was the foundation of many of his Sermons; and was thankfully appreciated by his people, who felt for the most part that a minister can hardly render better service to his brethren in the faith, than by teaching them how to understand and enter into the meaning of that Volume which will remain with them as long as life remains, and the autho-

rity of which is paramount to that of any human Pastor. They valued perhaps more than all others those courses of Lectures which were fundamentally, though not exclusively, expository; those, for instance, on the Beatitudes, on the Whole armour of God, and on the Book of Job: in which the ripe and fragrant fruit of Scripture, carefully culled, and skilfully collated, seemed to yield of itself, without further pressure, the rich juice of "doctrine and correction and instruction in righteousness."

CONTROVERSIAL subjects of every kind were entirely excluded from his public ministry—excluded by the spirit of love and humility, which filled his own heart, and out of the abundance of which his mouth ever spoke. He had an absolute horror of controversy, regarding it as sinful: and the use of his pulpit for such purposes he would have held to be utter profanation. Still, he had deeply studied all the subjects on which controversy between Christians usually turns, and had made up his own mind modestly but firmly on all points where he felt it necessary to form and hold an opinion; and some of these points must be briefly reviewed, to show the consistency of his principles.

First, then, of the CHURCH. The Church, of which he delighted to speak, and of which his sermons are continually full, was the *Invisible* Church,—the Bride of Christ,—the temple of the Holy Spirit, the living stones of which are continually being added by the silent power of Divine Grace, moulding them, shaping them, and combining them; till God shall accomplish the number of His elect, and the final consummation shall arrive. The real and vital union of all true

Christians in this blessed bond, was a thought which thrilled through his heart with a holy joy, second only to that of union with Christ Himself. It was a reality to him, clearer and more precious than any earthly relationship. All the scriptural images which embody it,—the branches of the Holy Vine, permeated by the same sap,—the members of the body nourished and controlled by their one sustaining Head—the stones which all rest on the Corner and Foundation stone; "not only supported, but united; not only builded, but fitly framed together"—were images instinct to his mind with a beauty and a meaning which showed that he was deeply taught of Him who uttered them.

But the *Visible* Church, what was that? He loved to quote, in answer, the wise and comprehensive language of our nineteenth Article; but still more he loved the Apostolic definition (1 Cor. i. 2), "All that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." No diversity of discipline, and of minor points of doctrine; not even grave and dangerous errors (as he believed them to be), would tempt him to look upon Christian bodies, distinct from his own Communion, as therefore aliens from the Covenant, or strangers to the presence of the Lord.

But he did not stop here. He yearned after outward unity as well as inward. His heart was penetrated by the Saviour's prayer for the oneness of His Church—"a unity not only of spiritual life, but of heart and mind"—a unity not inward only, but visible and manifest; for it was to be a witness to the world; and he wept over the unhappy divisions by which the purpose of that prayer was frustrated: he could not conceive how some Chris-

tians could acquiesce contentedly in this; "pointing out with complacency, as some good men do, the advantage of such a state of things, for the Scripture ever condemns divisions as sinful." "And if the Apostle St Paul, writing to the Corinthians, uses such strong language where there was division without separation, how much more would he use it, where (as now) there is actual separation in addition to divisions?" He saw himself, and bitterly lamented the jealousy and suspicion, the unseemly rivalry, and the ruin of beneficent plans for evangelizing and elevating the masses, which sprang, and must ever spring, from this unhappy source. *Must ever spring;* for so long as Christians heeded not the voice of their Lord, but laid down and maintained those outward channels of separation, in those channels (however softened by mutual toleration) would run bitterness, and pride, and self-sufficiency, and other evils of the natural heart.

But how to regain this unity? how to find a visible centre round which all might rally? Was it a Pope? or an infallible tribunal? or a traditionary creed? or the Episcopal order? or the transmitted virtue of Apostolical succession? Nay, these were "theories about the Church, which ordinarily only serve to rend it." The doubt and the question showed, of itself, a distrust of God's loving Providence,—of the eternal presence of His amalgamating Spirit. If only the strong conviction and the right desire were in every Christian heart, how speedily would union follow! And has not His Providence left us the means of securing this great end? does it not guide us still? There are some countries unhappily, where division and subdivision have proceeded to such a length, that

no visible centre of unity remains. It is not so in England. Here, at any rate, there can be no doubt that God's Providence has preserved it to us; nor can any one fear that His Spirit has departed from the body which His Providence sustains. Oh that we could recognise this with filial thankfulness towards Him, with brotherly forbearance towards each other! Oh that our Dissenting brethren would turn to us, and we to them; not as revolters, on the one hand, exacting conditions; nor as conquerors, on the other, enforcing submission; but as brothers, recognising their brotherhood,—Christians "seeking not their own, but the things of Jesus Christ,"—ready to learn and adopt from each other, or leave in harmonious diversity of practice, the minor points of discipline and doctrine which now divide and scatter us!

George Wagner himself did not feel any call to suggest, or join in, any definite plans for the promotion of this great end. His humble position in the Church, and his still humbler estimate of himself, forbade any such endeavour. Nevertheless, for himself as one amongst the many, he thus answered the anxious question, How we should do all that lies in our power to promote it?

By living near to God, and walking in the Spirit. By the exercise of patient and forbearing love towards those who differ. By forgiving those who injure us. By sympathizing with those who are in any trouble. By realizing that every true Christian, to whatever body he may belong, is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Bearing in mind on the one hand what the word of God says of *love*, oh, how careful we ought to be, lest by want of Christian courtesy, by want of gentle forbearance and of deep sympathy, we should "offend

against the generation of God's children!" And bearing in mind, on the other, what it says of *divisions*, we should be also careful, whilst manifesting love to individuals, not to sanction division and separation by word or by act*.

As a point of duty, in accordance with these principles, he would have continued, doubtless, to be a member of the Church of England, even if he had believed it to be in error as to doctrine. He could not of course have been a *minister* of the Church under such circumstances, while the rules for ordination continue to be what they are; but he would still have been a *member;* so far did he esteem the preservation of brotherhood and unity above an eager advocacy of minor points of truth. For the same reason, had he been a native of Scotland, or of one of the Protestant countries of the Continent, he would doubtless have adhered to the Presbyterian, the Lutheran, or the Reformed Church: although he was deeply convinced of the Scriptural warrant for Episcopacy, and the high advantages resulting from that form

* There are some judicious and charitable remarks in a letter of his, which cannot be inserted better than here, written after reading the life of Mr Groves, the originator of the peculiar views of the Plymouth Brethren. His correspondent, to whom he returned the book, seems to have been inclined to form a somewhat different estimate of it. "I have finished Groves' Life. Two things it has impressed upon my mind. First and foremost, the blessedness of entire devotedness to God, and a spirit of self-sacrifice. And subordinately, the blessing of belonging to a Church, which he unwisely left to cause unhappy divisions. I hold his isolated position to have been very unscriptural; though his love to all that are Christ's is very beautiful. His position was very sectarian, though his spirit was catholic. It was well said by one to him, 'We cannot have too much of your spirit, and too little of your judgment.' But God is very tender with our mistakes: and so, like this devoted man, we should be tender towards each other."

of Church government. Nay, it was thoroughly characteristic of his principles that he admired and defended the conduct of Martin Boos in remaining within the communion of the Church of Rome, though perceiving and denouncing many of its errors. There are some cases, no doubt, where duty permits no other course than absolute and immediate abjuration of a corrupt communion. But where it is possible to remain without compromising or silencing convictions, how far nobler and more Christian-like is it to do so, "speaking the truth in love" as a brother rather than a separatist, and meeting the consequences whatever they may be! "Wisdom is justified of all her children;" but they are the highest class of Christian confessors, who are the salt of the earth where God has placed them, and who sometimes are cast out and trodden under foot of men, not because they have lost their savour, but because they too faithfully preserve it.

As it was, it need hardly be said that George Wagner had no such difficulties. Earnest, impartial, conscientious study and thought had only confirmed his judgment of the sound and scriptural character of our national Church. To the ARTICLES of Religion he gave his entire and enthusiastic adherence; it was a labour of love over which he long lingered, to illustrate and explain them to the younger members of his flock; and this labour of love he resumed in his last illness, and was actually engaged in, when the message of death bade him lay down his pen. Some parts of the Church services, it is true, he could not have subscribed to, if compelled to adopt the meaning of the original writers, or even perhaps of the compilers of the Prayer-book; but these

he conceived himself entitled, nay, bound to receive in the light which the Articles threw upon them.

In illustration of what has been said, a few further observations may be ventured on. And first, of SACRAMENTS generally, and the forms which group around them.

If we are spiritually minded (thus he beautifully expresses himself), we shall love the Sacraments of Christ. The more spiritual we grow, the more we shall delight in them. And it is just because they are so spiritual, that they are so often misunderstood, or so little valued. Spiritual things can only be discerned by the spiritual mind. In this point of view, the Sacraments are like parables. Both try the heart, what spirit it is of. When our Saviour spoke the Parables, those who were taught of God sought after the spiritual meaning, and had their hearts enlarged; but those who loved not truth stopped at the outside shell. Thus hearing they heard not. So it is with Sacraments. Believers prize the grace of God; and, therefore, they love the signs ordained by Christ to signify the spiritual things which eye hath not seen. Their thoughts and desires go through the outward sign. But many do not see beyond the outward shell. (MS. Serm. Matt. xxviii. 18—20.)

On the other hand, he says in another place, very wisely and beautifully:—

There is a strong tendency in the human heart to lean on what is visible and tangible; and it is slow to perceive, nay, never does perceive without the teaching of the Spirit of God, that which is spiritual. The history of the disciples, as recorded in the Gospels, affords abundant proof that their perception of our Lord's spiritual nature was faint and feeble; and that they trusted in His bodily presence with them. It is

one out of many indications of this tendency, that they regarded such presence as essential to the performance of miracles. . . . Not even Mary, much as she had learned to love Christ, as yet understood the nature of His spiritual presence. . . . This was the reason why the Lord checked the Magdalene in the remarkable words of our text. Her desire to touch Him was an utterance and manifestation of this tendency to cling to the bodily presence: it was a symptom that she still was "knowing Christ after the flesh." And by the commandment, "Touch me not," he checked that tendency; in order that He might instruct her to know Him after the Spirit. This was fully accomplished on the great day of Pentecost. Then His former discipline was crowned. The previous tendency was fully overcome in the hearts of the disciples. They clearly perceived, and most vividly realized, the presence of their glorious Redeemer. Their life was henceforth one of faith, not of sight. Oh, happy would it have been, if the Church of Christ had always walked in this light, and held fast her Pentecostal blessings! The history of the past and the present proves that she has not done so. This tendency, which the Spirit overcame in the disciples, the Church of Rome in her fall indulges and sanctions, in her fearful doctrines of transubstantiation and relics, and calls it *faith*. Having lost sight of Christ's spiritual presence, she knows Him after the flesh, not after the Spirit. Christ's word to her,—and to *ourselves*, if we are in any way indulging that corrupt tendency of our hearts,—is *Touch me not*. (MS. Serm. John xx. 17.)

His views of BAPTISM may be briefly stated, without further comment.

[As applied to infants,] it occupies the same place under the New Testament dispensation, and has the same meaning, as circumcision under the Old.

The most Scriptural and practical view of baptism

seems to be that it brings us into a better covenant established upon better promises, places us in a new relationship to God, entitles us to great privileges, and lays upon us very solemn responsibilities. . . . It is an entrance into a body in which the Spirit of God puts forth His gentle and yet powerful influences: and is the basis of Christian training and education.

All this (in case of infant baptism at least) is a prevenient and universal benefit. And the bestowal of this state of privilege is what our Church (following a primitive nomenclature) entitles Regeneration, and describes in the first answers of the Catechism. "It seems also to be the doctrine of our Church—though the Articles do not prove it—that original sin (in the sense of guilt) is remitted in baptism."

In his Dallington ministry, he had also taught (that which is usually known as the doctrine of Mr Budd) that we might hope and believe that, in the case of those infants who were brought to the baptismal font *in faith*, some *special* and spiritual grace is vouchsafed "by virtue of prayer to God." But if we may judge by his absolute silence on this point in his sermons and lectures at Brighton, he saw reason to give up this opinion, and learned to look rather for an answer to such prayers, in the preventing and quickening action of the Holy Spirit on the opening mind of the child, when able to comprehend the privileges which baptism unconditionally conferred.

For "it is most important to make the distinction between *a privilege conferred* and *a character realised*." Great as the benefits are, thus freely conferred upon us, to make them truly ours—to give our baptism sacramental efficacy—they must be "consciously accepted;" they must be taken

up and vivified by faith. Some, by God's mercy, are enabled to do this from their earliest childhood:—

As consciousness awakens within them, through the teaching of God's good Spirit, their hearts open to the knowledge of Jesus, and the blessings of the covenant; and they never wilfully surrender its bonds. . . . But facts surely show, that those who thus grow up from early infancy to God, are few compared with those who wander from Him, if not outwardly, yet in heart, and break the bonds of the covenant.

Such is the corruption of the human heart, such its tendency to wander from God, that all facts and all experience prove that of those who are early consecrated to God, very many, if not nearly all, need to be brought into the holy bond again by the grace of God; need "to be put among the children,"—"to be *made* sons of God." (Article 17.) They need to have the Spirit of adoption given them, whereby we cry Abba, Father*.

To convey this sacramental efficacy to our baptism by a reflex act of faith, if it has not been conveyed to it already—awakening the spiritual faculties, if still they slumber, and strengthening them if they are already awake—is the purpose

* One of the last entries made in his commonplace-book, if not the very last, written at Malta with a trembling hand, refers to this subject. "The following extract from St Bernard will show how far *he* was from holding the rigid view of baptismal regeneration. Doubtless, the reason is to be sought in his practical acquaintance with the human heart. He says, 'We are all born in sin: it is therefore necessary that we should be regenerate by grace: which indeed we have received in baptism; but, alas! it has altogether perished in a worldly life. Now first, God pitying us, the virtue of grace works in us, that we should walk in newness of life. Thus *a man is born*, when the Sun of Righteousness, having arisen in his heart, illuminates the darkness of his mind.'" (S. Bernardi In Circumcisione Sermo III. § 5.)

and use of *Confirmation;* a holy and blessed ordinance, richly owned by God, though not instituted by His command; and proving the most powerful instrument of good in the hands of a faithful ministry.

The subject of the LORD'S SUPPER is one of far less complication; though chiefly so, because the condition of the recipients is less complex; for both Sacraments are in themselves possessed of a Divine significance, and an elastic capacity of application, not to be exhausted by words, nor contained by the apprehension of any human mind. George Wagner earnestly and devoutly protested against the doctrine which limited the sacred feast to a merely commemorative ordinance, "meant only to suggest thoughts to the minds of the recipients, and not to be the means whereby they receive (if they come in a right spirit) grace into their hearts." His sermons on this subject are admirable specimens of his teaching. Carefully, scrupulously, and reverently, he examined the words of Scripture, by which we must be guided; showing how, on the one hand, they witness against the error just described; and how, on the other, they guard us and preserve us from the superstitious imagination which attaches Divine virtue to the elements themselves. These elements, which "*we* bless,"—and the sanctity of which, therefore, is not essential, not supernatural, but simply one of purpose and use—are "the Communion," or participation (the means whereby, if we too are what that sacred action assumes us to be, we are participators) of the body and blood of Christ. Besides this highest aspect of the Lord's Supper, the meaning and consequences of which his devout heart loved ever to enlarge upon, he

was careful to remind his people how it was especially the symbol and principal means of unity between believers; and he rejoiced to dwell also on the eucharistic spirit with which the united members of the Christian Church on that occasion, more solemnly than at any other, should "present themselves, soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice to God"—the only* sacrifice which that occasion witnessed—themselves the only priests whose agency was needed, save the one Invisible High Priest, through whom the offering "was acceptable to God."

He was a great advocate for frequent communion, for which he gave his people ample opportunity, and would gladly himself have adopted the weekly celebration of it, as the primitive and apostolical custom, though deterred by reasons which need not be inquired into. It was a grief to him to see so few communicants in his church, though indeed they amounted to about one-fourth of his congregation; and he frequently spoke upon the subject, reasoning with the misapprehensions, allaying the fears, or arousing the consideration of his people; yet ever remembering, and showing them that he deeply felt, that the result to be longed for by the Christian minister was not to see a crowded attendance at the Lord's table, but to produce that state of heart and mind which should necessarily bring them there. Nor should we fail to notice here the pains he took to create and sustain in his

* For a full exposition of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, see Chevalier Bunsen's Letter to Dr Nott, included in his work on Hippolytus (2nd vol. of the first edit.); a Letter, the frequent reference to which will be remembered by the readers of Arnold's Life and Correspondence, and in the admiration for which George Wagner heartily concurred.

people a devout spirit of reverence in the use of the more ordinary means of grace; especially in the conduct of Divine Service, and the attitude of mind which should be preserved both before and after attendance in the House of God. He would dwell on every detail of this subject, small as well as great, with affectionate minuteness, earnestly pointing out its important bearing upon the objects which all should have in view, the preparation of their own hearts for the solemnity and reality of worship, and the glory of God which all might combine to promote.

PUBLIC events were seldom noticed in his sermons, except on public occasions. And when he advocated the claims of some religious or charitable institution, he was careful to connect them with the thought of some daily or permanent duty, basing all upon those Christian doctrines which alone can sustain a truly Christian motive.

He was singularly free, moreover, from that continual bias towards some favourite conclusion or speculation, which so often impedes the usefulness of pious and able ministers. Even when the main current of his energies was directed upon the overthrow of difficulties in the way of the Penitent's Home, no one could detect in his ministry any preoccupation of thought with this subject; and on many speculative points, to whichever side his opinion leaned, his congregation, for the most part, remained ignorant of that opinion. Deeply (for instance) as he felt the fearful errors "and unhallowed practices" of the Church of Rome, and the way in which they obscure and pervert many primary doctrines of the Gospel, this was a topic which he avoided in his sermons. He would not touch upon the point, unless his subject led him to

it, and then he would treat the matter only in a practical way. He spoke of the Church of Rome as a fallen Church, more deeply fallen than Ephesus or Sardis; but never as the Babylon of the Revelation, never as the Man of Iniquity "which was to be revealed in his time." Indeed the conclusions he had come to in his earlier Apocalyptic studies, had been of late years much altered by the broader and more sober principles of interpretation laid down by German theologians, especially by Hengstenberg in his great work on the Revelation.

The SABBATH he believed to be an ordinance of moral and perpetual obligation, and marked with painful apprehension the tendency which he saw in the country to relax its observance. He justified his position by arguments clearly and firmly, though temperately, drawn from the whole body of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation; and confirmed them by an appeal to the state of those parts of Christendom respectively, which accepted or rejected the view which he was advocating. The practical conclusions which he drew from this, the spirit in which he would have Christians keep the weekly commemoration of their risen Lord, must find an echo in every heart to which the same faith is dear, even though compelled to dissent from him in the historical and ecclesiastical aspect of the subject, and arriving at the same conclusions by a different road.

His opinions on this point arose legitimately and necessarily from the views which he took of the Old Testament Scriptures; and the same may be said of the expectations which he entertained of the visible and national restoration of the Jews, and of the establishment upon earth of a MILLENNIAL

triumph of the Spiritual Church in the manifested presence of her Saviour.

These are subjects on which it becomes the thoughtful and humble Christian, whatever his expectations may be, to speak with a due sense of his utter inability to read the secrets of the future. Though his own judgment may lead to a contrary expectation, he will submit that judgment to the will of the Most High. Let the eye of faith rest firmly on what is *beyond*, clearly and undoubtedly revealed; and whatever is intermediate will bring its blessing to all alike, who are truly waiting upon God. This was George Wagner's attitude of mind, though he definitely entertained the expectations which have been indicated.

Be it our care to live to Jesus (he said); be it our prayer that we may be like Him, meek as He is meek; and then, whatever may be God's will concerning His Church, whatever blessings He has in store for it on the new earth, as well as in the new heavens, they will be ours.

He indulged no speculations on these matters. He hardly ever mentioned or alluded to them in his sermons. He knew that whatever shall take place upon this earth in the magnificent drama of time is as nothing compared to eternity. All these things, if indeed they are to come to pass, are preparatory still. They are not our portion. "Having begun in the spirit," we are not to be "made perfect in the flesh." We are called to enter into the mind and purposes of Him with whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." We are bidden to "fix our affections on things above"—things which ever will be above;

the glory of which is perfected in this, that they are not only unseen but eternal.

And surely, to no spirit was it ever given to have sublimer gleams of that beatific vision than to his. Unutterable blessedness gathered round his heart, as he thought of the sea of crystal, and the song of the redeemed, and of the unveiled presence of Him whom here he loved so faithfully. Unearthly sweetness filled his tongue, while, absorbed in the glorious subject, he strove unconsciously to anticipate the strains which no mortal lips can utter.

The reader will readily acknowledge, it is hoped, that George Wagner's ministry was no common one: even as it showed itself in the pulpit. Opinions will differ widely, no doubt, as to many of the details which have been specified. And there will be considerable difference, in all probability, in the estimate formed of his intellectual capacity. The observation was made, that he was not a man of genius. The statement, perhaps, needs a qualification. It is one of the properties of Divine Grace, thereby as in other ways witnessing to its Author, that it elevates even the mind and intellect to a higher than their natural level. And there could scarcely be a more striking instance of this, than in the case before us. The inward faculties, purged and purified and exercised as his were, become akin to genius intellectually, while spiritually they soar immeasurably higher. They take their stand by the side of genius, though their range at that elevation is circumscribed by natural laws. Some will estimate such a mind by the range of its faculties; others by its purity and clearness. Some will pass slightingly by the hum-

ble and quiet mountain pool; where almost unobserved it lies, deep and low,

> "Beneath its little patch of sky,
> And little lot of stars;

but others will linger to mark the reflection of the heavens in its pellucid waters; they will see that among those stars shines the Polar Star itself, and linger to gaze upon that heavenly image which was seldom mirrored upon earth more faithfully.

It was the universal feeling of all George Wagner's friends and of not a few among his congregation, expressed in language strikingly coincident, that their friendship with him, or their attendance on his ministry was a talent for which they must give account. And why was this? Not only because he shewed them what a Christian can *do*, and still more, what he can *be;* but far beyond all this, because he disclosed to them *how and by what means* he was what he was. His was a soul that was manifestly in contact with unseen and spiritual realities; and those realities are above us and around us now, to be apprehended still, as he apprehended them. If there was a truth, besides the fundamental facts of the Gospel, to which he bore his testimony more earnestly than any other, it was this—that God might be found, and ought to be found, by the believing Christian. If there was a duty more urgently pressed upon his people than any other, because it is the preparation for all other duties, and the effectual spring from whence their performance flows, it was enforced in the exhortation:—

Rest not till you *are* made nigh, and *feel* that you are made nigh by the blood of Jesus.—If you think

that you cannot know this, until you stand before the judgment seat, you are quite mistaken. You *may* know it now, and *ought* to know it now. You are living altogether below the privileges to which you are called, if you are content to leave this point unsettled. It was not Paul's privilege as an *apostle* to obtain mercy; it was as a *sinner* that he found it in Christ Jesus. It was not a blessing connected with the points in which he *differed* from us, but one connected with the points in which he was *like* us. Seek, then, mercy earnestly—seek it *now*—seek it with the expectation of finding it. But if with all humility you can use the words of the great apostle in truth, what remains for you? To *use*, dear brother or sister in Christ, the grace that you have received.

CHAPTER V.

PERSONAL HABITS, TASTES, AND QUALITIES. SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

THE last chapter has touched upon some points which cannot but be subjects of disagreement among many. Before we pass on to another topic which can hardly fail to call out afresh some diversity of opinion, let this chapter be devoted to a subject which all may contemplate with one heart and mind, the lovely picture of Christian consistency and holiness in private and domestic life.

Let it not be supposed that the brightness and innocent pleasure of such a life had passed away, when George Wagner settled down in his solitary lodgings in Montpellier place, amidst the harassing duties of his laborious ministry. It was indeed a total change for him. There was no longer the primitive household of Dallington vicarage, encompassed with its inner circle of orderly school-children and grateful villagers: nor was there the cultivated retirement, and studious leisure, which he had enjoyed so long in his father's house at St Leonard's; but the Christian heart soon makes a sunshine of its own, even in places overshadowed by the world; and so it was with him. From the first he was well contented with his small and simple lodgings—two rooms communicating by folding doors; his sitting-room nearly surrounded

with well-furnished book-cases, the one window looking out upon St Stephen's Church: and before long, they were consecrated in his eyes by the sweet and hallowed character of *home*. Nor were human associations wanting to complete this character. He soon attached himself to the family with whom he lodged, attaching them also to himself by a deeper bond than that of courtesy and kindness. They regarded him with the veneration and affection which Christians feel for the pastor whom they trust; and his daily example, continually before them, seemed only the purer and loftier the more they examined it. And he, on his part, showed continually that he did not regard the connexion between them as one of temporary convenience only. They joined with him daily in family prayer; and all his intercourse with them was that of a friend. He would talk with them playfully, about the move they would some day make all together into a larger house; "for you know I must go with you," he would add; and not only playfully, but seriously too, he would talk the matter over with them; reviewing the advantages and the objections, and throwing himself into their plans and circumstances, as though they had all one common cause.

And besides his old friends and relations in Brighton, it has been seen how affectionate an intercourse he cultivated with many of the members of his flock. With some of these he could ever find sympathy and refreshment; above all with one, who was indissolubly associated with him in the last great object of his life, the object which called out (as none ever had before) the energy and devotedness and tenderness of his character.

Nor let it be forgotten that one of these old

friends—one of that beloved flock—was doubly endeared to him by the associations of the past; and preserved to the end the bond of "natural piety," which united the days of Brighton to the days of Dallington. During the earlier years of his ministry at St Stephen's, till the illness of his friend necessarily altered the character of his visits, he was almost a daily guest at the lodgings of Mrs N——. There, if nowhere else, he was sure of perfect quiet, and the healing influence of a care and consideration which he had learned to submit to, almost as a filial duty. It may be allowed to one who has profited in no small measure from the same faithful friendship, to dwell for a minute on the recollection of that well-remembered scene. There, in the little room in Temple Street, where the faultless taste and exquisite refinement of the owner gave grace and dignity to the humble furniture, and simple fare, which her means could alone supply, George Wagner would often spend an hour of his evening, or give himself a brief interval of rest during the busy occupations of the day. There he would seek counsel and sympathy in some difficult case of ministerial management; submitting himself in turn to be questioned and reprimanded in points regarding his own health, when the quick eye of his hostess detected something to apprehend. And there he never failed to find the refreshment that springs from contact with a congenial spirit—a meek and quiet spirit, like his own, which had learned in the furnace of affliction to prize above all else the hope and faith of a Christian; yet which, like his own, was keenly alive to the charms of all that is graceful and natural and unconstrained, and loved to soften the lesser troubles of life with the unfail-

ing elasticity of an affectionate and playful cheerfulness.

It has been said that his own lodgings were small—too small, perhaps, for the requirements of his health; and with an aspect hardly suitable. "Alas!" writes the Rev. H. V. Elliot, "how often have I expostulated with him about his north sitting-room, as well as on the excess of his labours!" But he did not himself judge these circumstances to be as important as perhaps they were. On being pressed by a friend to take a larger house for his health's sake, he answered, "The only thing that would induce me to do so, would be the pleasure of entertaining those who are in want of assistance. I would dedicate a room to the use of some sick or disabled Missionary, sent here for change of air; and if I was married, I would dedicate a second to the benefit of a sick governess."—"His manner and habits," writes the same informant, "were apostolically simple. Witness his little room; his simple fare; his economy, that he might have the more to give away in his Master's work. He had been poorly on one occasion for a few days; and we had not met. He sent me a little note, to ask me to come and see him, as it seemed so long a time since we had talked and prayed together. I found him on the sofa; which, with every chair in the room, was filled up with books and papers. I said, in a joke, 'Well, if I invited a lady to come and see me, I would have a chair ready for her to sit upon!' Smiling, as he pushed away his papers, he offered me one, and said, 'You think my lodging shabby. Don't you?' I looked around, and replied how much for his sake I wished it was larger and loftier. 'Do you?' he answered;

'I am quite satisfied with it; and if I possessed thousands a year, I would not wish anything better.'" His ordinary habits of life at Brighton may be briefly told, without entering too much into details, or into exceptional circumstances. He rose at an early hour—how early was unknown even to the people of the house: though sometimes an expression, which he dropped, led them to fear that he allowed himself less rest than was obviously desirable,—and after dressing, and spending much time at his devotions, he generally contrived to have breakfast over by eight. From that hour to eleven, he had his books and papers before him on the table, to take advantage of such time as should be at his disposal; but the minutes were few, for the most part, which were not taken up by visitors calling to see him, chiefly from among the poor. From eleven to one he went out; to inspect his school, to attend a meeting, or to look after some of his sick or suffering flock. At one he dined, or professed to dine: for often (as we have seen) this time also was broken in upon, and his landlady's considerate care for him disappointed in other ways besides. From two to five he was out again, on his rounds of pastoral duty. Then, if he were punctually at home, came tea, and rest, or preparation for his evening employments. His lectures, and similar engagements, were generally at seven; and there was something of this sort to occupy him every evening, or nearly so, except those on which he allowed himself to accept some friendly invitation. If he stayed at home, he took some light refreshment about nine. The people of the house, when they retired to rest, left him with his candles, at work in his sitting-room. The candles marked next morning that it

had been at no early hour that he had retired himself; and all else, which the landlady observed, was that his Bible always accompanied him to his bedroom, and lay there by his side at night to be ready for use if ever he were wakeful or disturbed. His sleep was often interrupted of late, by the distressing cough which gained ground upon him; and he had frequent recourse to his chosen consolation. One morning his landlady, observing how ill he looked, found upon inquiry that he had not closed his eyes all the night. She was beginning an exclamation of pity; but he interrupted her at once. "Don't be sorry, Mrs ——, I have had such a happy night—a night of communion with God." And his countenance (she said) showed the truth of it.

It was difficult to understand how he found time for all that he wrote, and all that he read also. "Mr Wagner has a great many books," said the landlady to her husband, some months after he had first come to lodge there; "but I do not see much use he makes of them. I never see him with any other book but the Bible." Nevertheless, he did make large and effective use of his library; as his sermons, his lectures, his conversation showed; and as is attested further by the Common-Place book, of which there will be occasion to speak presently. He read a good deal at meal-times; and had the power, which well-disciplined minds acquire, of turning every spare minute to account.

George Wagner was no ascetic. Yet few men entered so thoroughly into the spirit of the apostolic exhortation, even to "eat and drink to the glory of God." His friends remember the devout recollection with which, at his own house, he would

give thanks at every meal; and, knowing his habit, they observed the reverent pause which occurred, without obtruding itself, in other houses also, on the same occasions. He loved to give his ordinary food a sacramental significance; it was a welcome memento of his dependence, as a perishing creature, on the Sovereign Giver of all good, and an emblem also of the higher gifts by which the life of his spirit was maintained. None who ever lived with him can have failed to notice this; and to observe how beautifully he exemplified "that holy, retained, bridled way of using his repast," which Leighton speaks of, "with an eye upon a higher end."

The scantiness of the rest, which George Wagner considered sufficient for himself in his ordinary life, was, in some degree, made up for by occasional visits to his family at St Leonard's, or to his friends in different parts of the country, with whom sometimes he could be persuaded to stay for a few days together, when convinced that he needed change and repose.

And, happily, there was one great source of relaxation and refreshment, which he never allowed himself to neglect—his annual holiday in the summer. He was fully persuaded that this was an indulgence which he absolutely needed, without which his health would fail entirely; and he took it, accordingly, and threw himself into the enjoyment of it, with the zest of a child availing himself of the undoubted gift of a wise and loving parent.

It was his habit on these occasions to go abroad, if possible, or else to one of the British mountain regions; and, throwing himself into the closest contact with nature, to trust to his feet alone

for conveyance. It was not always easy to find a companion for these pedestrian excursions, of like ardour with himself; for twenty-five or thirty miles a day was a distance which he would gladly undertake and accomplish. "He was a very good walker," says the Rev. C. D. Bell, who travelled with him in Switzerland; "better than any one, looking at his slight frame, would suppose: and the very exercise of walking was one source of his enjoyment. The mountain-scenery of Switzerland gratified more than one of his varied tastes. He was fond of geology; and took great delight in examining the nature of the different rocks, which at one time rose in stern grandeur on either side of some Alpine pass, or at others sprang in large masses from the bed of some foaming torrent; which in some places stooped down to the narrow paths which overhung the valley, and were worn to the smoothness and polish of glass by the frequent descent of avalanches from above. The glaciers, too, were a source of much interest to him; and at Montanvert, he made the guides point out to him the different spots on the Mer de Glace, from which Professor Forbes had taken his observations on the theory and movement of those frozen torrents. With his other accomplishments, he combined that of being a good botanist; and he added largely to his *Herbarium* during our excursion, collecting in his walks many of the lovely flowers which grow in the pastoral valleys and the upland ranges of the Alps. He lost no opportunity of adding to his stock of dried flowers; and, sometimes, as soon as we arrived at the place where we intended to rest for the night, he would inquire if there were any collector of plants in the village; and if so, send for the man at once, and

make such selections from his portfolio as appeared to him most worthy of being preserved. But though moving amidst scenes, which presented never-ending objects of interest, it was most striking to observe how his thoughts ever took a heavenward turn: how he looked on the natural beauties which surrounded him, not merely with the eye of a philosopher and a scholar, but with the eye of a Christian; and how he gathered from all that he saw illustrations, which might, when he returned home, be employed to recommend the truth to the people whom he loved. All his happiest thoughts evidently centred in his work. When speaking of his great delight in the magnificence of the scenery, he would constantly add, 'But this is only to strengthen us for our work: there is no pleasure equal to that of working for God.' And once and again have I heard him say, following up some expression of delight at what he had seen, 'But I long to be at work again.'

"More than once he turned aside from his direct route, in order to see the working of some educational or religious establishment of which he had heard. I remember his visit to a College near Basle, and another which he made to Pastor Fliedner's Institution for Protestant Nurses, not far from Düsseldorf, in which he seemed much interested. Our Sundays abroad were particularly happy days. He enjoyed the rest, after the week's excitement: he enjoyed the opportunities they afforded for calm and lengthened meditation: he enjoyed meeting with those who, on that day, were drawn together to worship one common Father, in the words of a Liturgy which he loved." Several of his sermons are marked as

having been used on such occasions, when a few English could be got together in an hotel; but he generally contrived to spend the Sunday in some place where there was a stated English Chaplain: always preferring not to preach himself; though ready at all times to pursue the work of the ministry, if he saw the need or the opening for it. This readiness, indeed, was very remarkable in him. It was a duty which he imposed upon himself, and recommended to others, never to enter or leave a town or village, in the course of his travels, without special prayer for God's blessing upon it; and, bearing in mind what peculiar opportunities his knowledge of foreign languages gave him, to fulfil his favourite precept to "sow beside all waters," we may well believe that many a precious seed was dropped as he passed through the countries he was visiting. One of his dearest Herstmonceux friends, a member of Archdeacon Hare's family, notices how much she was struck on one occasion, on the eve of his going abroad, with the feeling which seemed to be strongly impressed upon his mind, "that he was not going away from his work; for that he went abroad, as much in the character of a minister of Christ, and ready for His service, as if he were at home among his people." Before leaving, he prayed with her; and fervently expressed his desire, to carry out this intention, and to be ready for his Master's work, wherever and whatever it might be.

He would return from these excursions, with renewed vigour, and glowing spirits; and without any of the sense of strangeness, if not discomfort, which most men experience, on resuming their routine of duty, after an interval of rest. It was

beautiful to see how harmoniously, in his mind, work and refreshment, things sacred and things secular, blended together, forming a varied, but progressive whole. Thus, in the introduction to a course of Wednesday Lectures, which he began immediately after one of these holiday expeditions, he compares the order which he proposed to follow, to the plan which some traveller lays down "by the aid of maps and books, for the path he intends to take, in exploring some mountainous region; though, when he had entered on his excursion, he will often deviate from it." Or fresh from the wonders of the microscope, he says, when speaking of charity: "Love carries about with it no magnifying glass for our neighbour's sins. Its lens is of another kind: it sees its neighbour's most hidden graces. The naturalist uses his glass to discern the beauties and harmonies of nature, not its deformities. Love discerns the beauties and harmonies of God's work in the soul, not its corruptions."

The study of natural history and physical science, was one in which he felt peculiar delight, from the time when he first took it up. Mathematics continued always to be a favourite study with him. He took peculiar pleasure in teaching them to the more advanced pupils, whom, (as we have seen) from time to time, he gathered around him: and, when not too much occupied with necessary business, he would sometimes take up a mathematical book, or engage in the solution of some problem, from the mere love of the subject, and the enjoyment and refreshment which the mental exercise supplied. The other pursuits, just mentioned, were also dear to him, as bringing the mind to a closer contemplation, and more

intelligent apprehension of the wisdom and love of the Creator in His visible works; and as such, he was fond of recommending them to others. Thus, when one of his cousins, a public-school boy, was recovering from a long illness, which had laid him aside, and was not allowed to resume his usual lessons, he recommended the parents "to lead him to the study of natural history; which, he said, would amuse his mind, and at the same time raise it to holy and heavenly things; so that what appeared to be an idle time, might become a most profitable one; more so (it might be) than the usual routine of work and play in a school-boy's life."

His own reading, both of necessity and by preference, lay chiefly in theological and religious books; but by no means exclusively so, even with the exceptions which have been noticed. He took a lively interest, too, in all the leading questions of the day, and was deeply stirred by the excitement of public events; so deeply, indeed, that during the Russian War, he was strongly impelled to offer his services as a Chaplain, at Sebastopol or Scutari; and probably might have done so, had not his infirmity of deafness reminded him that he was in great measure disqualified for the work. Nor was he without a true taste for *art*, and a ready appreciation of its great and elevating tendencies. Architecture and music especially, as combining so well with the admissible external elements of Protestant worship, were sources of high enjoyment to him; and he would gladly have cultivated the taste he possessed for both. While he was in Germany, in 1837, he took lessons on the violoncello, and had begun to make some progress with

it; but this accomplishment was lost during his residence at Cambridge, and he never found time to recover his ground; a result which he regretted, and for which he was sometimes inclined to reproach himself, feeling how much use may be made by a clergyman of a knowledge of music.

Thus far, the sketch here attempted has been confined almost entirely to personal habits, and attainments, and tastes. It may be allowable now to dwell, somewhat more at length than has been possible hitherto in merely incidental notices, on what George Wagner was in the various relations of private life.

How many a conscientious and useful minister of Christ fails, nevertheless, to hold out the light of Christian truth to his own family! Indeed, there are probably few who have not felt this a more difficult task than to maintain a consistent bearing among comparative strangers. Early habits, an established tone of intercourse, a tacit understanding between the various members of the family, how they stand, and *are to stand*, one towards another; these things—combined with the universal tendency of human nature to relax watchfulness and slacken effort in seasons of freedom and rest—too often make home the spot which, less than any other, is sanctified by the pervading spirit of holiness. It was not so with George Wagner. And, perhaps, there is nothing in which his example is more remarkable, and more beautiful, than in this. He felt that the nearer he was by natural ties to any of his fellow-creatures, the fuller should be the light, the more genial the warmth, which the Christian should endeavour to impart to them. And what he was, and ever strove to be, to his nearest relations,

will have appeared sufficiently in the course of this Memoir.

In his own servants, or his father's servants, he always took a peculiarly pastoral interest, seizing every opportunity of influencing them for good, and ever evincing the friendly sympathy he cherished for them. "He felt a strong desire," writes his sister, "to render family prayer interesting to all, and he adopted the plan of giving each individual a different text to find out upon the same subject. These texts were read aloud the following morning by each person; and then he added a few words of explanation,—a few short pithy words—and ended with prayer. One of the servants was a Roman Catholic; and it was quite interesting to see the pleasure *he* took in preparing his text, and how often he was to be seen with his Bible in his hand, looking out for it."

Few, if any, of the servants who were connected with him, failed to be impressed with the holy example and instruction thus accorded to them: and of some of them much more than this may be confidently said. Perhaps the most touching instance of all, is that of his father's game-keeper at Herstmonceux; which shall be given in the words of his friend, the Rev. J. R. Munn, whose testimony has been so largely used already in the Chapter on Dallington. "V. L. was for many years game-keeper to Mr Wagner. He first taught George to shoot: and I imagine, from V. L.'s expressions, that he promised, in his early days, to be as good a shot as he was a cricketer. From L.'s account, Mr George soon gave up his sporting—but not his old friend the game-keeper; who was a very honest, sober, humble-minded man, but extremely ignorant, not having in his

boyhood, though a long time at school, attained the simple art of reading. Evening after evening, George used to leave the drawing-room at Herstmonceux Place, during his Cambridge vacations, and go to L's cottage (the lodge at the gate), and most patiently pass an hour in teaching L. to read, opening his heart and mind at the same time to serious things. He was unsuccessful as to the *reading*, for poor L. was as great a dunce, when a man, as when a boy. But L. was grateful; and the 'labour was not in vain in the Lord.' L. afterwards took service as game-keeper at Ashburnham Place; and so became my parishioner: yet neither Mr Wagner, nor dear George, gave up their interest in his welfare. But I am to speak now only of George. He occasionally called on L., took great interest in his children, and sent two of the girls to a school for training servants at Brighton (both of whom have turned out well). In the course of a few years, V. L. fell into ill health; and died at last, of a most painful and lingering illness, with all his mental faculties sound to the last gasp. For more than six months I visited him during this illness; and it was then, that the consequences and results of dear George's attentions came out. I soon found that his heart had received the seed sown by his friend; and every day something welled forth, during my visits, reminding me of, and proving, this good work. V. L. died, full of peace and hope. During all his most acute sufferings, he never murmured; but said, all was good and right. Daily did he call down blessings from the Lord, on his kind friend, Mr George: and often, as some fresh light broke in upon his heart, he would say, 'How little I knew, when he used to read to me of an even-

ing in my cottage, how I should bless him for his pains!'"

Such was this consistent Christian in his home, within his family, and among his household. Follow him into a wider circle, and the same consistency shone no less brightly. In general society he was cheerful and unconstrained, though quiet and retiring, and more silent than else he would have been, in consequence of his deafness. He never hid his colours; no one could mistake or overlook his principles; yet neither did he display them offensively or obtrusively. His bearing was that of a courteous, humble-minded gentleman; ever ready to enter as far as possible into the feelings of others, yet showing plainly that there was one subject only on which his sympathy was unbounded, and by which all the energies of his heart and mind could be drawn forth. And thus, while his conversation at an ordinary dinner-party would be wholly free from observations embarrassing to others, yet in houses and in company where he felt he might speak freely, it was of such a character, that a servant, in one of these houses, once remarked to her mistress, "I would not for much miss waiting on Mr Wagner: it is like a Sermon to hear what he says at table."

He was so unaffectedly humble, that it required care and attention to draw him out. Many of his friends, who will cordially agree with the testimony of one of them, "He always seemed to me nearest an ideal Christian, in temper, of any man I have ever known," never discovered the deep treasures of thought and wisdom which were combined with that holy temper. His friends too [illegible]en left him, where he ranked himself, "in the [illegible]st place." Perhaps none did full justice to

him; and each will be surprised to find how richly he possessed some quality which it was reserved for others to bring to light. Still, with those who knew him best, nothing could be more genial and unreserved than his intercourse. He "held sweet counsel" with them, and kept nothing back of what sprang spontaneously to his lips; his countenance and his manner were as animated as his language: and every gesture and expression showed how true was the affection, and how ready the confidence, which he bestowed upon them. Above all, he loved to *pray* with them; and thus not only to consecrate and cement his friendships, but to employ them to the furtherance of God's glory. This, more than anything else, was the test and the measure of his intimacy with his friends—whether it were a natural and necessary thing to unite together in prayer.

A few extracts from the letters of his friends (lay as well as clerical), put side by side without further attempt at arrangement, will illustrate and develope some of the points which have just been touched on.

Every one was attracted to him. Not that he ever flattered: you loved him, because you saw that he loved you: but his love was equal to the effort of reproof; the more effectual, because so mild and gentle. I remember the "cold rebukeful look"—as cold as any look of his could be—with which he once reproved an uncharitable remark. And it is certainly no slight homage to right principle and conduct, that simple, truthful, earnest, and loving as he was, without any artifice or effort, at his early age, and while battling with so much evil, he succeeded in acquiring a degree of personal influence, and a genuine esteem and confidence, which are rarely conceded to any man. . . . I

remember his once meeting a lady of considerable ability (the writer of one or two works), who had been, a day or two before, to hear a preacher of great eloquence, by whom, however, she had been but little impressed, and who (she seemed to think) had mistaken his vocation in choosing the pulpit rather than the bar. Yet the instant George Wagner left the room, her praises of *him* were unbounded. "He drew you to him," she said. His tone and spirit had won her, as they did every one.

Speaking of the testimony of those who were comparatively strangers to him, I may mention that of a friend of mine, a lady who had been often in his company at Brighton, and who is well qualified to judge of a character like his. "What did you think of my friend, George Wagner?" I asked. "What Coleridge thought of George Herbert," she replied; "that he was the model of a Christian, a scholar, and a gentleman."

He never in my presence forced religious conversation upon any one: very often he would not even allude to the subject: but if *you* introduced it, his bright look, and evident delight at entering upon it, showed at once you had touched upon the thing his own mind was fullest of.

I had not many opportunities of seeing him (writes Mr Erskine); but what I did see of him, I felt to be most edifying: and even the remembrance of him has sometimes been to me like a word of Scripture, helping me out of the tangle of worldly things. . . . I think he was one of the most lovable beings I ever met with. In fact, I cannot say that I ever met with any one like him. His beautiful simplicity gave such a charm to all the rest of his character; and in that character there was a harmony, undisturbed by a single jarring note. I have known many men of active, energetic

minds, engaged in the ministry, of whom it could be truly said, that their hearts were in their work—and yet I have felt, with regard to some of them, that the question might be put, Is it *their* work, or their *Lord's* work, to which they are so devoted? Whilst with regard to him, all who saw him knew that he was not his own, and that his meat and drink were to do his Lord's work. . . . His visit to us is a precious remembrance to us all. We had friends with us of different forms of mind; but he was the brother of every one; with an open ear, and an open heart, ready to receive all human thoughts and feelings.

We were very much struck (adds the sister of the friend just mentioned) after a conversation, which was carried on by several members of our little party,—when some interpretation of Scripture which was new to him was suggested—with the look of deep and earnest feeling pictured on his countenance; and with the way in which, after the others left the room, he sat down with his little Bible, going from one part of it to another, for above an hour,—and then with much solemnity said, that "he could not see in Scripture what had been suggested." Whenever any conversation was going on, between any of our guests, or between my brother and any one, he was always on the alert, with his hand behind his ear, to listen, or to join in the conversation, as circumstances happened: and, whether the speakers were of one Christian denomination or another, it mattered not to him; if truth were to be got, or good of any description to be drawn, from the speakers.

Being at Brighton for a night (writes a friend, who had been separated from him for several years before), I sought him out before leaving. A warm and a hearty reception I had. I can easily bring before myself the tall thin form, the bright eye, the sweet smile, the high-bred courteous bearing, the fine true-hearted

recognition of all the ties in the past—and that is all, on this side the grave! His extensive and well-used library goes to complete that final picture for me. . . . I have seen few on whom the *seal*, the stamp of victory over the world, the badge of the Peace that passeth understanding, were more unmistakeably set. And the recollection of this is sweetly mixed with the remembrance of affection towards me and mine.

The general impression which he produced (writes another friend) was the same, with all who had the privilege of knowing him. He seemed almost like a being of a higher sphere; breathing the atmosphere of heaven while still below, and shedding around him a hallowed and inexpressible calm. To me personally he was a Barnabas, a true son of consolation. I first became known to him at College; and shall never forget how, in a time of deep affliction, he sought to pour the oil of divine consolation into my still aching heart. When I first entered holy orders, the trials and difficulties of a pastor's life often weighed heavily upon me; and it was no small privilege to be able to pour my sorrows and cares into an ear so affectionate; and to learn from him how to meet, bear, and profit by the trials necessarily incident to my course. . . . A visit of his is deeply impressed on my memory, in another season of heavy affliction. When he heard the trouble I was in, he came over to comfort and help me; and a comfort and help indeed it was, to kneel by his side, while he offered to God his earnest intercessions for us. I remember I was much struck with the particularity of his petitions. He had gathered from my conversation the special points of anxiety, and brought these forward in his prayer, one by one. . . . The last time I ever saw him, he performed the same office towards me. I had met with much trial in my ministerial course, with circumstances and results (as I felt then) of peculiar bitterness. My visit to him was a blessed time; and now that he is gone, I think with thankfulness of our last

intercourse with one another, and how he helped me to see my Father's hand in all that then seemed so painful; and to believe, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, that His ways towards me were the very wisest and kindest.

We first met at Brighton (says another of his most intimate friends), being both for a time members of Mr Vaughan's congregation; and afterwards at Cambridge. Even when I first knew him, he was high up on the mountain of holiness, almost out of my sight; but in order to attract me higher, he would bring himself down to my level. Indeed he never seemed sensible of the height which he had attained; like the great Apostle, "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before." . . . In season and out of season he seemed ever to be about his Father's business. Indeed it never appeared to be out of season with him; for through grace, if I may so speak, it had become *natural* to him to do good. He did it apparently without effort: and whatever he said or did seemed to tell. There was little in the word or deed, perhaps, in itself to produce effect; but there was something in his look and manner—there was such a heavenly spirit about him—as there is about those who hold such a constant and close communion with the Saviour as he did—that he could scarcely help doing good. A holy influence seemed to accompany him wherever he went. . . . I never expect to look again on the like of our departed friend.

Shortly before the marriage of my eldest sister (writes another) he kindly called to offer his congratulations. Wishing to remind her of the sacred, as well as joyous nature of the occasion, he took her by the hand, saying, "I hope your wedding is one to which He who was present at Cana in Galilee may be invited." There was such a joyful gladness in his manner, such a heavenly brightness in the expression of

his countenance, that these few simple words made a lasting impression on our memory.

The anecdote just related suggests the mention, without any violent transition, of another trait in his character; the possession of a vein of gentle and delicate *humour*. It could hardly be otherwise; when a clear and shrewd understanding, like his, was combined with a heart, like his, overflowing with love and human sympathy. He had a keen perception of the roughnesses and jarring accidents of life, and of the inconsistencies of his fellow-creatures; and these, contemplated in the light of extenuating love, and of a sure faith in a perfection unrealised as yet, could not but give rise to the humour of which we speak. An observant reader will detect traces of this faculty in various passages of his letters. It is better, perhaps, not to adduce instances of it; both because higher and better things claim our attention, and also because it was not of that sort which best will bear recital. It was of that quiet, fine, and hardly perceptible character, which never degenerates into jocularity, or hardens into satire; but "plays round the heart of a friend," and opens the way for graver remonstrance, or more earnest conversation, to follow.

In his intercourse with children, the outpouring of this same feeling took a heartier and simpler form; and showed itself in the joyous participation of their high animal spirits, and its legitimate expression, *fun*.

The fondness for children which he showed so remarkably in his schools, was displayed no less amongst his own relations, and in the houses of his friends. "His love for little children," writes

one of these, himself a family-man, "was manifested in everything. I observed that, while we were engaged in entertaining older guests, he would be sitting behind the door in an adjoining room, with the children on and around his knees, ministering to them as usual. I never met with any one, who, always engaged in doing his Master's work, commended it by so genial a spirit. The man, whose very look was a Sermon, would run races with the children on Hampstead Heath; and would interest them by talking of the days when he was one of the Eleven at Eton." It was very beautiful to see how tenderly and cautiously he would guide every movement, while joining, to all appearance, in the roughest possible play with them: and still more beautiful to observe how, when the game was over, he would draw them to himself; keeping his arms round them, while engaged in serious conversation with their elders; and not releasing them till they, too, had heard some instructive story from his lips; or were dismissed with a few words of blessing, or affectionate advice, which showed the love which filled his heart, and the holy state of that heart which so overflowed towards them.

"I used to think a walk with him a very great treat, when I was a child," writes one of his cousins: "for he knew so much of the wild flowers, and their names and uses; and the beautiful lessons he taught from them all, of the Creator's wisdom and love, were sure to make an impression on a child's mind: given as they were in so cheerful and winning a manner.....One of my first recollections of him is, of his being one of a party in a long walk at dear Herstmonceux; in the course of which my enjoyment was likely to come to an

end, by our having to pass through a field of cattle. I was, of course, the subject of ridicule to most of the party; but I shall never forget the gentle and loving manner in which he (instead of laughing at the imaginary danger) soothed my childish fears, by reminding me of God's watchful love and care for His little children; and I remember his repeating some verses of the ninety-first Psalm, and telling me to learn them by heart: so that the walk through the dreaded field was one of great enjoyment to me, instead of terror."

One other point remains to be noticed under this branch of our subject, the method of his intercourse with *strangers*. It has been mentioned already, that it was an habitual duty with him "to sow beside all waters," as he expressed it; to take every opportunity of speaking a word in season, or giving the conversation an improving turn, when thrown accidentally into the company of persons unknown to him. We can hardly doubt that he was permitted to effect no slight good in this way: though, from the very nature of the case, we are not likely to know of such instances, or to have much to relate in illustration of his practice. He was not a man to speak afterwards of what he had done, or attempted. But it so happens, that his habit of interspersing his Dallington Sermons with anecdotes led him sometimes to speak of what he had seen or said himself; and thus some instances of this sort are readily adducible.

The following is a specimen, taken from one of these Sermons:—

Eight days ago I had some conversation with a man on the outside of a coach, on the most important

of all subjects—the way of salvation. I asked him, whether he went to the house of God. He replied that he did, telling me the name of the church which he attended, where a very holy and devoted minister preaches the Gospel; but he added, that "he was rather deaf, and often lost much of the sermon." I asked, "whether he had heard enough to find out the way to heaven." What do you think that he said in answer? He said that "he thought that if a man attended church, and kept the Lord's Day, and did the best he could, he would get right in the end." "But," I said, "have you always done the best you could?" He seemed to think he had at first, until we entered into particulars. "Have you never," I inquired, &c.

And so he proceeded to instruct the man on the coach—and through the recital of this, his hearers in church—on the range and the nature of our duty towards God, and our duty towards our fellow-men.

Or take another specimen :—

I was travelling some weeks ago, and came to a place where I had to wait some time for a conveyance. So I took the opportunity of speaking a few words to an elderly person, in the hope that God might enable me to speak a word in season. Now, I had heard from good authority, about the minister in that place, that he was a truly excellent and devoted man; and I had also heard from good authority, about three or four ministers who had preceded him. So I said to her, "Do you go to the house of God?" She said, "I go to *chapel*, but I have heard the Church minister preach." "How did you like him?" I asked. "Oh, pretty well; but I dont like his *ways*." "Well," I said, "what are the ways which you don't like?" She then gave me some particulars, which it is not necessary to repeat; but they showed me that the minister

had only done his duty, and had not gone beyond it. She added, that "they liked the former ministers much better." Now, one of these had acted in a manner quite unbecoming a Christian and a Clergyman. The other was a respectable man; but he allowed all things to take their course; he did not, like Aaron, stand between the living and the dead, to stay the course of sin. I then explained to her, from Scripture, what sort of a man a minister after God's heart should be, and endeavoured to remove her prejudices. Whether this seed, sown by the wayside, shall take root or not, must be left in prayer to that God who alone can give the increase.

With persons of a different class of society, with whom he might be thrown for a time, his mode of proceeding would, of course, have points of difference; but the spirit and intention was the same, and he seldom failed to find his way to some opening for profitable conversation. In the ordinary dealings of business, too, the same tendency and the same influence manifested themselves. Among the letters of condolence which his parents received after his death, that which gratified them not the least was one from the London booksellers who had supplied him with works of foreign literature, and who observed, with an apology for the unusual course they had adopted, that "his frequent visits to their house of late years, and the opportunities thus offered for attachment to him, had created a feeling very much beyond that of tradesmen towards a customer."

George Wagner was a man, by natural constitution, of a gentle and amiable temper; but the same Divine Grace which had overcome his natural defects almost entirely, till (as it was well said by one of his parishioners) "he had so cru-

cified self, that no outward sign of conflict was observable in him," raised also and transfigured the good qualities to which he was inclined, and stamped them with a character higher than his own. Various instances of his meekness and patience in the exercise of his ministry have been related already; and it would be easy to add to them; but two little anecdotes, showing what he was in the more unguarded moments of life, will perhaps have greater value in the eyes of those who know how much is often indicated by little things.

He came one day to a dear friend and constant counsellor in Brighton, in extreme trouble and distress, having just met with a disappointment in his parochial arrangements which entailed great anxiety and difficulty upon him. They were consulting what could possibly be done, when a knock at the door interrupted their deliberations, and a lady was announced—by no means an unwelcome visitor herself—but any interruption at that time was exceedingly trying. The lady was one of those affectionate mothers whose thoughts and conversation turn almost wholly on their children; and soon she was deep in the accustomed subject, detailing all her fond expectations and hopes. It seemed almost impossible, at such a time, to listen with interest to her maternal tale; and so felt the mistress of the house, sorrowing for her friend and pastor; but, her attention having been called off for a minute by some domestic requirement, when she looked back to her guests, she found George Wagner deep in conversation with the delighted mother, *his* face also glowing with no affected pleasure and interest, and all the current of his sympathy running

free and warm in the channel which had diverted it so inopportunely.

"I was once calling upon him at Dallington," writes Mr Munn; "and I saw an instance of the suavity of his temper, which struck me much. He had just had his garden borders made up, and had pointed out to me his flowers in bloom. It was the end of May. While we were talking in his room, a lamb had come from the churchyard, and cropped nearly every flower. *I* first saw the delinquent at his mischief, and cried out. He got up most quietly; went out, and took up the little creature which had spoilt the result of his work, so gently and kindly, and carried it to the churchyard without a rebuff or complaint. That little scene was a lesson to me!"

One other point shall be mentioned in conclusion. "Alas! how few there are," was his own lament upon one occasion, "who come out quite clear in *money* matters!" That he was one of those few, none can doubt who knew him. His exceeding liberality and generosity in giving was based upon strict economy in his own expenses, and scrupulous exactness in "rendering unto all their due." Even at College he saved much, that he might give much away; and all that he did was done with careful secrecy. "I make it a condition," said he, when forcing the acceptance of a £5 note on one of his clerical friends for distribution among the poor of his parish, "that you let no one know from whom this comes. Remember," he added, archly quoting a passage from Carlyle—for his friend was a great admirer of that writer, "remember—'Speech is silvern—silence is golden! Speech is human—silence is divine!'"

At Dallington, how well he combined a becoming and unostentatious economy with a liberality which else would have been far beyond his means, has been sufficiently shown.

When he removed to Brighton, his father insisted on continuing to him the allowance which hitherto he had been accustomed to, a sum which was of itself more than sufficient to cover his simple personal expenses there, including the cost of his annual holiday. The consequence was, that he was free to devote the whole of his professional income (and latterly this was not an inconsiderable one) to works of charity and piety; and such, in fact, was his constant practice. To his School alone he contributed £350, besides the many supplementary expenses which he defrayed himself without mentioning them in his Report. And in the support of his Penitents' Home, and the prosecution of the Mission connected with it, he almost overstepped the bounds of laudable self-denial. Once, in the early stage of that Mission, after he had sent many poor girls at his own expense to Institutions in London, his principal fellow-labourer came to tell him of another case, in which she had been actively interesting herself. "They will take her in at the Institution," she said; "but we must send £5 with her at once." "Here it is," he answered, handing her a bank-note. "But you cannot afford it," replied his friend, who knew that he had spent all he could possibly spare; "you are not leaving yourself enough to meet present demands." "I have my *books*," was the answer. "You think, perhaps," he added, "I love them too well. Yes, I love them; but every book shall go, before I will allow such a case to pass neglected. What? does not

all we have belong to Christ? Shall we not rejoice to devote everything to Him*?"

And yet, even for the sake of this high and holy object, for which he was ready to sacrifice all he had, he would not depart a hair's breadth from the law of truth, and integrity, and honour. "When he was exerting himself to raise funds for his Brighton *Home*," writes the gentleman who acted as his solicitor in that business, "he applied for assistance to various county magistrates. I will endeavour to continue the story in his own words, though I cannot describe the animated look which accompanied them. 'And, amongst others, I wrote to Colonel Wyndham. I received a reply, containing a remittance of no less than £50! But, in about a fortnight, came another letter to say that Col. W. had mistaken me for my uncle, the Vicar: and that he would hardly otherwise have felt warranted in remitting so large a contribution. Of course I immediately wrote, offering to return the money; but I thought I would just add, that I knew my uncle was very much interested in clearing off the debt of All Saints' Church. Well, Col. W. replied, leaving it to my uncle and me to do what we liked with the money; and so it was agreed to divide it between All Saints and the Home. So, I sent my uncle £25; and I added £10 from myself, to show that I had no uncomfortable feeling about the matter. And then my father, not liking me to lose the £25, sent me that sum for

* It was a favourite thought of his which he used often to dwell upon:—"All that we have, is lent us—our possessions, our faculties, our bodies, our souls. All is a *loan*. One thing only is given to us—*the unspeakable gift*."

the Home; and he sent the same sum to the Vicar for All Saints'.'"

It need hardly be said that this pure, and high, and loving spirit was eminently a *happy* one. His Brighton friends, and the members of his congregation, recur to this point again and again, with an emphasis which shows how strongly this impression abides with them. Words, that told of the happiness within, burst sometimes irrepressibly from his lips—and his face, when it was not clouded by the sorrows or the guilt of others, was radiant with peaceful joy. "The beauty of holiness," says one of these witnesses, "shone so brightly in his countenance, that a friend of mine said, she never met him in her walks (for she did not know him personally) without the text coming into her mind, 'To be spiritually minded is life and peace.'"

Yes; this was the secret of his happiness, as well as of that loveliness of outward character and conduct which won the admiration of all. He was reconciled to God; reconciled and conformed to Him, through the Redeemer and Mediator, whom by faith he apprehended; the lower and baser desires of the carnal mind were effectually mortified, and its less ignoble tendencies also habitually subjected to a higher principle: and that principle was "the mind of the Spirit," the gift of divine life which filled his inmost heart.

Nor let it be forgotten how he nourished that inward life. It was by constant and fervent prayer; prayer persevered in, continually resorted to, long and earnestly sustained; not as a duty merely, but as a refuge and consolation, a privilege, a happiness. In his secret chamber, no

doubt, many was the struggle with himself which he had to carry on, to the end of his life; many the earnest "supplications with strong crying and tears," which he had to offer up "to Him that was able to save him." But he doubted not that he was heard; and when he rose victorious over self, and went forth to do battle against evil by the side of others also, prayer was still his weapon. "I once saw his face when engaged in prayer," writes one who looked up to him as a spiritual father. "I happened to open the door of a room, where he was praying with ——. His face was as though he saw Him whom he was addressing. It was a solemn lesson; and I never can forget it. No words could convey what that look expressed."

Prayer was the sustenance of all that has just been described; prayer was the hand by which he drew spiritual treasures out of the inexhaustible storehouse of grace. Oh, why is it forgotten that those stores are inexhaustible, and still ever open to believing prayer? What need have we at once of the reproof and the promise of the Saviour! "Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

CHAPTER VI.

THE BRIGHTON HOME FOR FEMALE PENITENTS.

It has been mentioned, that in one of his excursions abroad, George Wagner paid a visit to Pastor Fliedner's establishment for Deaconesses, at Kaiserswerth; an institution which interested him deeply, not only for its own sake, but because he felt that there was a great want of similar institutions in England. He had often considered the case of that large number of persons, widows and single ladies especially, who are suffering both in health and character for want of a more definite purpose of life, and a round of daily duties: persons often of scanty means and retiring habits, who cannot create or discover a course of usefulness for themselves, though they have at once the capability, the desire, and the latent energy, for becoming most efficient helpers of the Christian ministry. Invite such persons to combine under an organized system; provide them a home, where they can live together at once more cheaply, more comfortably, and less anxiously, than each can do singly on her own scanty income; assign and apportion them their part in those works of charity for which the Church needs their help—as district visitors, as teachers, as nurses, as super-

intendents or emissaries of religious and benevolent societies; and much good will have been effected, no less for themselves than for the community in general. There could be no conceivable reason why such institutions should not find a place in the Protestant Church as well as in the Roman Catholic; or why, within the Protestant Church, they should be associated with that particular system of doctrines with which similar undertakings have usually been connected. Let the experiment be made in simple dependence on God's blessing; and if He would prosper it, what a blessing this might prove to the Church; what a prospect would be opened for supplying a want which cannot but be felt in every corner of the land!

With such thoughts in his mind, he visited the establishment at Kaiserswerth; which, though in many respects different from the institutions he was contemplating, pleased him exceedingly, helped him to a further development of his plans, and left him more desirous than ever of bringing them to an accomplishment.

This was in the summer of 1853; and on his return to Brighton, he turned his mind zealously and resolutely to the practical consideration of his object. Brighton appeared to be an admirable place for originating such a work, and testing its practicability. Its healthy and bracing air; its attractiveness to the very class he sought to benefit; the large and various field of usefulness it supplied; and, not least, the help and sympathy he might reckon on, not only from the Clergy, but from many active and Christian spirits among the laity; all these considerations sustained and encouraged him in his attempt.

The following extracts from letters to his sister, at this time, will show how earnestly he threw himself into the prosecution of his plan.

Very many thanks for your kind letter. The same difficulties presented themselves to my mind, which have occurred to yours. It would always be a matter of some difficulty to establish a thing of the kind; but this difficulty is increased when too many limitations are imposed. . . . Since I saw you I have been over one of the houses, and think it peculiarly ill adapted for the purpose. There is not a sufficient number of bed-rooms—one is very large, and the others very small.

I have found out here that the most moderate terms which ladies pay as boarders are £65 per annum. But if their bed-rooms are very good, it is two guineas a week. I should think that £90 would not be amiss. To raise it too high might exclude valuable persons: and thus increase the difficulty of finding a sufficient number. In Pastor Fliedner's establishment the deaconesses pay nothing: it is altogether supported by voluntary contributions. If I commenced one, it would, of course, be self-supporting. . . . I regret to say that it is impossible for me to leave home this week. Pray tell the Chevalier and Madame Bunsen how sorry I am to miss them.

With regard to our scheme, I quite agree with you in differing from Madame Bunsen. I have no doubt whatever but that persons from the middle classes might be found to devote themselves to that peculiar work. But that class has already many doors of usefulness open to them in England, which they have not in Germany—for instance, our Training Institution. But for *educated* persons there is nothing of the kind, excepting those which have been established on objectionable principles. And yet among this class there is more real devotedness to be found at this present time, than among the others. It is quite possible, and

probable, that some single women are self-indulgent; but this is not a necessary attribute of single life; and many of that class do not live alone, but in boarding-houses; where they have many annoyances, and no advantage, save that of cheapness.

It will be seen from these extracts, that his plans were drawing near to a practical commencement, in the autumn of 1853; when another great work, forced by circumstances upon his notice, appeared to him so urgent in its claims, and gradually so engrossed his thoughts and energies, that the former plan was necessarily laid aside for the time. This new work was his care for the poor degraded outcasts of society, which formed so prominent a part of his labours during the last three years of his life; and which led, soon after he commenced it, to the establishment of the Brighton Female Penitents' Home.

It is almost impossible to repress the feeling of regret, that his former plan was postponed to any other work of love, however admirable and urgent. The successful execution of such a plan would have proved, it may be thought, a far greater benefit to the Church and nation at large, leading the way to numerous similar institutions throughout the land, than the addition of another Penitents' Home to those that already existed; even though that addition developed some new plans and arrangements also, which may prove of material use to many similar establishments. But such a thought, if it arises, will be silenced at once, if we see (as we can hardly fail to see in this case) a higher Power plainly marking out the course which was actually taken; when we see (at any rate) that it was impossible for one who waited humbly on the leading of God's providence,

and trustfully looked to be guided by His will, to doubt that the work which he now undertook was appointed him, and that it must have the preference given it, for the time, to all besides. That such was George Wagner's conviction, there can be no doubt; and few, if any, after reading what will soon be related, can hesitate to pronounce this conviction well founded. If it was a mistake, blessed are those who are so mistaken! Blessed are those who will sacrifice their cherished plans, and give up their personal wishes, at a call which they believe to be that of God! who will not shrink from duty, however uncongenial, however painful, when they see in its prosecution their appointed path, and recognise the voice of their Redeemer bidding them take up their cross and follow him. Before we proceed to the narrative of what was done, let those who regret George Wagner's change of purpose, read and consider an extract from a sermon of his, preached about this time (on Eph. vi. 15), which will help to show the motives that ruled his heart at every turn.

It is a wide range of duty to which a Christian is called. There are many ministries of love to which he may devote himself. There were those who ministered to the Saviour, when He was upon earth; and we, brethren, may still minister to Him, although He is bodily in heaven. For He is still to be found, and ministered to on earth, in the persons of His suffering people. He has told us what the King will say to those on His right hand hereafter (Matt. xxv. 34, &c.) . . . The grace and providence of God will guide us, if we look upwards, to those special ministries, to which God would have us devote ourselves. They are often just those which lie farthest away from our natural inclinations—just those about which we should most

confidently have affirmed, "I shall never be engaged in that way." Now, it is a great thing to be ever *ready* for any work to which it may please God to call us—ever earnest and persevering in the fulfilment of that ministry, whatsoever it be, to which He may already have led us—ever willing, like the apostle Paul, "to spend and be spent" in His service.

Nor, indeed, did he ever abandon his project of establishing a Deaconesses' Institution; which he would have resumed, no doubt, had life and health been granted him for some years more, as soon as other objects had been accomplished, which he judged more urgent and more important at the time. Thus he writes again to his sister, a few weeks after the foregoing letters:—

Although the work has cast the other idea into the background, I have not altogether surrendered it, and am still anxious to make Miss Nightingale's* acquaintance, if possible. If you can further this in any convenient way, I shall be happy.

And now for the circumstances which led to the formation of the Institution which we are considering.

Many years before, G. Wagner had been much interested, it appears, by a Sermon which he heard at Cambridge in behalf of a Refuge for Penitents. But at Dallington, and for some time even at Brighton, he had thought but little of a class the very existence of which was rarely obtruded upon him. One day, however, as he was walking through a street in a neglected part of

* It will be remembered that this letter was written in the autumn of 1853, before the mission to Scutari was undertaken; and when few comparatively knew and honoured the name and the great qualities of Florence Nightingale.

Brighton, his attention was arrested by three poor girls without any headdress, talking loudly and wildly. He saw in a moment what they were; and the thought of them, and of the thousands like them, fixed itself painfully on his mind. Could he not do something to rescue them? and was he not bound to attempt it? All night long he lay awake, filled with thoughts like these, and praying to be guided in this matter. Next morning he unbosomed himself to his friend, Mr Vaughan, asking his counsel and help in the work of mercy to which he felt himself impelled. But his friend wisely dissuaded him from making such attempts as he was then meditating. For any effectual measures, the help of a lady was absolutely needed, willing and able to devote herself to the work. And before the friends parted, they prayed together that it would please God to send one endued "with the love and sympathy and zeal which such sad cases require."

The remainder shall be told in the words of a clergyman who writes in the name and by the authority of the parties most closely concerned.

While he was praying, the prayer was answered.

A lady, the widow of a Missionary, residing in London, unexpectedly received an invitation to come and reside for a time with an aged lady. She accepted the invitation, and after a while they came together to Brighton.

The elder lady was a dear and valued friend of Mr G. Wagner; and he was often at her house. One day he called; and, on leaving, put a book into the hands of his aged friend, requesting her to give it to her companion, and ask her to read it. The book was the Life of Gough, the Temperance orator. It told most touchingly of his once degraded state, when a drunkard—his ruined, miserable, apparently hopeless state;

and how, when all men seemed to shun him, one word of kindness had touched his heart, and had led him to seek in Jesus Christ pardon, mercy, and peace. One word of kindness! As the two friends read the touching history together, they could not refrain from tears. And if God's blessing on *that* made it so efficacious, why might they not speak words of kindness to the most lost and most degraded, and be the means of saving some like brands from the burning? And together they knelt down and prayed, that the Lord of His goodness might bring them in contact with some poor miserable thing, that they might say words of kindness to her, and be the means of saving her. . . . This prayer was repeated several times; but no way seemed open. At length the time was coming, when it should be necessary for them to leave Brighton. Their preparations were made; and in two days they would have left it, never intending to return.

The day before they went, however, Mr Wagner called, full of sorrow; and the tears rolled down his cheeks—he could not restrain them—as he told of a poor fallen girl, whom he had hoped to reclaim, and had visited almost daily for six months*; but who had that day turned from him, rejected his offer, and calmly expressed her determination not to return from her evil course.

The history fixed itself deep upon the mind of the younger lady. She, too, had her night of deep and anxious thought. "This is what I have been praying

* The way in which he was led to know this young person is too remarkable to be left unnoticed. The daughter of a small tradesman had been seduced by a gentleman in the town. Her father, full of grief, told the story to a female friend. Acting on her advice, he went to the nearest clergyman. He found he was in London, and came back to his friend, saying it was a positive relief to him, he felt so ashamed to tell of his daughter's sin. She would not let him rest till he called on a second clergyman. He was engaged. And then she went herself to Mr George Wagner, who without a moment's delay put himself into communication with the poor girl.

for. I feel I am called to this poor erring child." Accordingly, next day she went to the minister. "Give me her direction."—"It is of no use. She will not see me any more, nor any one from me."—"But I feel I am called to go. God will bless my words of kindness." He gave the address, and she went.

She found the girl—told her message, the whole history of the book, the prayer, the determination; adding words of love and hopefulness. And the hard heart was melted at once. The poor girl consented to see her parents, consented to change her lodging, and to go to a home where she might redeem her character, and be led back again.

A new lodging was procured, and she removed to it at once. The next day the lady drove to see her charge. She found her asleep; but not alone. Another poor wanderer, a beautiful creature, but one who had fallen more deeply still, had heard of the kind lady and had come to implore her help. "Oh, ma'am, I hate this life of mine. Can you save me from it?"—"I can; but I know of no place to send you to, but one where they will cut off all this long hair of yours."—"Ma'am, only save me, and," stretching out her arm, "they may cut off this limb." She was committed to the care of another lady, and through mercy saved from her life of sin. Nor was this the only instance. Several more poor girls came of their own accord, within a few days, to ask for the kind lady who spoke to them those words of love.

Here was God's instrument. The young minister saw and recognised it. But the time was not yet come. She had to leave Brighton: she had to remain with her friend till removed by death, and then to return to her own home, and arrange many affairs. And then, and not till then, she returned to Brighton, and gave herself up to this blessed work. . . . For three months she remained there with a friend, employed in seeking these lost ones. Twenty-three poor

girls were received, and sent to London, at Mr Wagner's sole charge. The London institutions would then receive no more. And hence the necessity for THE HOME.

The events here described took place in the winter of 1853-4, and the early part of the following year. Many other interesting details, respecting individual cases, have been given in a little work, entitled *The Sin of Great Cities*, which was written by the devoted Christian lady, who had now given herself up to this work of mercy, and printed for distribution in July, 1854. A great and definitive effort was then made to establish a separate institution of this sort for Brighton. The first plan, suggested by the lady herself, and which appeared the best, till unforeseen objections were discovered, was to provide a Home for the reception of Penitents at some distance from Brighton, in the country, out of sight of the scenes which reminded them of their past life.

It was soon found preferable, however, to have the Home more closely at hand: indeed, a sudden influx of urgent cases, in the summer of this year, made it absolutely necessary to take a house immediately, wherever it could be procured. One of the unhappy girls of the class among whom the mission lay, was seized, when on a visit to Brighton, with cholera; of which she died in a few hours. Her companions, with whom she had spent the few preceding days (including Sunday) in frivolity and sin, were so stricken with horror and remorse, that they came in a body to the lady, of whose Christian exertions they had heard, and implored her to save them from their guilty life. A small house accordingly, opposite to the Level, was engaged the very next day, and hastily fur-

nished; and in this as many Penitents as could be received were lodged, till a larger and more suitable house was found, on the Lewes-road; to which, six weeks after, the Penitents were transferred; and the plans for the management of the Home, which its projectors had contemplated, were at last fully developed and realised.

Hitherto the sole management and control of this great undertaking had rested with George Wagner and the Christian lady who was associated with him in the work. And though liberal contributions had flowed in, since the issue of his circular, the responsibility of all the expenses of the establishment lay as yet upon him. In November, 1854, however, a Committee was formed, according to the intentions which the circular had announced; consisting of seven gentlemen, besides himself, who came forward to aid him in his labour of mercy. Two medical officers gave their services gratuitously. The lady, who had been foremost in the mission, redeemed her pledge by becoming Superintendent of the Home; and under her was a Matron, with two or three assistants, one of them the wife of the porter of the establishment, all of whom were resident on the premises. George Wagner himself took the post of Secretary to the Committee. He had also been very desirous of retaining the office of Chaplain. But the Committee, partly from the wish to spare him the labour this would entail upon him, but still more out of delicate consideration for his position before the public (young as he still was, and unmarried), judged it best to make another appointment; and secured the services of his friend, the Rev. J. Griffith, as Chaplain to the Institution. The arrangement proved of great advantage to all

parties. A second clergyman, like-minded with himself, was brought into a pastoral relation with the inmates of the Home; while he, on his part, ever preferring his friend in honour to himself, encouraged as much as possible the ministerial visits of George Wagner amongst his charge; who also, by an arrangement which all insisted on, attended St Stephen's Church on the Sunday.

The apprehensions, which the Committee entertained, of public scandal attaching to him in consequence of his connexion with this Christian work, were neither unreasonable in themselves, nor altogether unknown to others. Some even of his own family shared in them; though those of his relations, whose opinion he most respected and cared for, were soon reassured, when they perceived how thoughtful and judicious a spirit was united with that purity of heart which they reverenced and trusted with unwavering confidence. Their entire sympathy with him in this work was a source of great comfort and help to him. His honoured friend Archdeacon Hare, also, whose failing health and inability to attend to business prevented him from co-operating, as else he would have done, with one whom he so esteemed and loved, in a work which drew forth his hearty sympathy, gave him the support of his affectionate encouragement, observing "that dear George's pure and heavenly spirit was just the one which fitted him for such a work; and that with him, the disadvantage of comparative youth and of being unmarried would be compensated for by his purity and likeness to that Heavenly Master, who came to seek and save the lost, and did not shrink from the touch of 'the woman who was a sinner.'"

Though the control of the establishment, and the regulation of all arrangements, were now in the hands of the Committee, it is needless to say that they all looked to their secretary, the founder of the Institution, as the moving spirit of the whole. His judgment was respected, and his wishes deferred to, by the general feeling of his associates; and all the more so, because his wishes were always controlled by his judgment, and his judgment was always formed on principles of patient observation, and Christian love, and wisdom drawn from a higher source than his own mind. Day by day, too, he devoted all the time he could spare, and the unfailing support of his sympathy, his counsel, and his prayers to the encouragement of his admirable fellow-labourer; the only danger (one of which they were both well aware, and against which they guarded by strict and careful rules, scrupulously observed) being, lest he should give too much time to this one object. She, on her part, regarded him as the very life and soul of the undertaking; and he was indeed one whom no difficulty could daunt, when engaged in the service of God, and no perplexity could find unprepared with some wise and practical suggestion. The principles of the Home were quietness, orderliness, industry; sustained by unsleeping vigilance on the part of the superintendents, and an unwearied spirit of calm and compassionate love. Very few religious observances were enforced. He shrank from imposing on the inmates too strict a form of outward penance or of constrained devotion. He knew that minds so disordered, so degraded, so perverted with vicious excitement, needed the calming, sobering influence of constant though not excessive em-

ployment, and strict though not wearisome seclusion. They needed that Religion should present itself to them in its hopeful, beneficent, and practical aspect. He dreaded overstrained excitement for them, with its certain and dangerous reaction; still more he dreaded hypocrisy, so likely a consequence of pitching the tone of devotion in too high a key. He strove to restore in them the taste for a humble, quiet, useful life; and to keep steadily before them the prospect of returning to such a life in the world without; while tenderly and attractively were set before them the doctrines of forgiveness and redemption by the Gospel, leading them gently to look back and reflect on the fearful abyss into which they had been plunging, and into which even yet they would fall again, unless they held fast by that Divine hand which was stretched forth to save them. And thus he trusted and prayed that by God's grace a principle of true penitence might be awakened and established in their hearts; penitence founded on practical experience, on quiet thought, on growing self-knowledge, on deep and entire conviction; penitence of which the elements were not only horror of the past, and vehement self-condemnation; but also, and in a still larger measure, humble and silent sorrow, self-distrust under the prospect of renewed temptation, thankfulness to God for His mercy in arresting them, and a hopeful consciousness of the change which had partially been effected within them, as the foundation and earnest of what they might yet attain.

Their busy day began between five and six in the morning; some minutes being set apart for silent private prayer, under the eye of the Matrons who had charge of the different dormitories.

This practice, together with short family prayers at the appointed hour, was repeated in the evening. After dressing, during which a text of Scripture was learned by heart, to check any tendency to conversation, they proceeded to their different departments of work; the laundry, the kitchen, the sewing-room, the house; each department being under the charge of its own responsible matron. Every girl during the period of her residence, was introduced in turn to each of these departments; and was required also to make with her own hands a complete set of wearing apparel, with which she was furnished upon leaving the Home, if her conduct had been satisfactory. The laundry and the sewing-room helped largely to supply the funds, by which the establishment was maintained. Suitable intervals were allowed for meals, and for exercise in the garden, a small but thickly-sheltered piece of ground, secure from intrusion or observation. A book was read aloud to the party who were engaged in sewing; and some useful instruction given to all at night, besides the visits of the Chaplain and the Secretary, by which two evenings of the week were marked. Night and day the inmates were always under observation; though taught to acquiesce in this constant surveillance, as a necessity imposed upon them for their good; not out of suspicion, but as a protection against themselves; the need for which they must continually recognise, and willingly submit to as a perpetual act of penitence. No other badge of humiliation was laid upon them. The hair was not cut short; and the dress which was given them, though studiously plain and modest, differed in nothing but its uniformity from the appropriate dress of an indoor servant.

On Sunday they were taken in a body to Church; a practice which never led to any objectionable consequences; and the great advantage of which was felt to be the formation of a habit, connected with pleasurable associations, which might remain by them, by God's blessing, throughout their after life.

A passage from a sermon preached by George Wagner in behalf of the Home, in January, 1856, at St Stephen's, the last which he preached there on this subject, will give a better idea than the words of any other person of what had been attempted and effected at the Institution up to that time, and of what he still looked forward to.

It is for such as have been scattered in the dark and cloudy day, that the Home for which we plead this morning has been provided; for those who have been driven away by the selfishness and hard-heartedness of the world; who have been lost to God and to the Church. We cannot but have a firm conviction that such a work is in accordance with the mind of Him who "came to seek and to save that which is lost." This is the grand point. It is a great encouragement when we are allowed to see tokens of God's blessing; but the first and chief question is this, "Is it according to the mind of Christ?" If we feel that any work is so, we ought to go forward in the face of any discouragement. In this particular work, however, God has been very gracious; and there have been many tokens of His blessing. The number of inmates is now, and has been for some time, 22; which is all that the house will hold. The Report for last year stated that 37 were admitted: 15 more admissions have been made during the present year, making in all 52. Some of these have been sent home to their parents; some, after due training, have emigrated; the larger proportion of those who have left

the Institution are in service; and nearly all of them are giving satisfaction. The great principle on which it is sought to train them for usefulness on earth, and happiness in heaven, is the principle of Christian love. If this training does not succeed, it is quite certain that no other can do so; for it is the tendency of Christian love to subdue the heart, and elevate the character: whereas undue severity hardens and alienates. The effect of this training has been very striking. It would be difficult to find any institution in which there is more willing obedience, more complete order, and more cheerful industry—or any in which there is so much gratitude. These features, as well as the manner of the inmates, so free on the one hand from all hypocrisy, and on the other from all levity, has struck every visitor, as well as those who have kindly taken servants from the Institution. Though not called an Industrial Home, as that name has already been appropriated to another institution, it is nevertheless thoroughly industrial. All are regularly employed in different ways to prepare them for different places in service; some in a laundry—others at needle-work—others again in house-work and in the kitchen. In the evening they all receive instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as in Scripture. But there have been higher tokens still of the divine blessing, we have reason to believe, than these. The great object of the Home is to endeavour, by Christian love, a holy example, and faithful instruction in the truth, to lead their souls to Jesus, and to train them up to new and holy habits. It is more difficult, of course, to speak with confidence of *this* result than of the others. There is, however, every reason to believe that some have been led to true repentance, and are now walking in newness of life.

This, brethren, we feel, is not the place to enter into minute details. Should any wish to know more of the history and working of this Mission and Insti-

tution, we shall be happy to furnish them with a Report*, and to give fuller information. One thing only it seems needful to mention; and that is, the different ways—if God has given you willing hearts—in which you may help us in this work of mercy. First, you may do so, by giving generously to-day to the funds raised for the support of the Home. Give, brethren, oh give, remembering that all that you have is God's.

Then, too, the committee are anxiously making arrangements for the purchase of a house, which is admirably adapted for the purpose; and which, if not secured, they will have to resign in somewhat more than a year. One benevolent person has promised £200 towards this object. Are there not others who will give largely, since they receive so largely from God?

Then, further, efforts are now being made to assimilate this Institution to some others in the town. For there are other Institutions, to which nearly all the inmates are sent, and their expenses (varying from £11 to £16 per annum) are paid, by benevolent persons interested in their welfare. This plan has lately been adopted by us; and some have already come forward, and expressed a wish to support an inmate in the Home: and they have promised either to give themselves, or to collect, 5*s.* a week towards her maintenance. Much blessing may be expected to follow this Christian kindness. A larger amount of holy influences will be brought to bear upon this Institution; more prayer will be offered up to God; and we trust more gratitude awakened. We cannot but hope that, when this plan is more widely known, others may wish to follow the example so nobly set them.

But most of all, brethren, would you help if, your

* The Annual Reports of the Institution, printed by J. F. Eyles, North-street, Brighton, will be found full of most interesting details, which it has not been thought desirable to transfer to these pages.

circumstances permitting it, you were led to take one of the inmates into your service, and patiently continue the training which has been already much blessed.

Beloved brethren, we ask you all for your sympathy and help to-day in some of these ways. You bear the name of Christ. It is a privilege to do so. But oh! it is not enough. Be ye imitators of Jesus, in His love, His compassion, and His self-denial. If possible, be not satisfied without searching out the miserable yourselves. If this cannot be, earnestly aid those who are endeavouring to follow their Saviour's holy example.

And there may be some here, who have the unspeakable misery of looking back upon a youth spent in forgetfulness of God, and in urging others along a downward path. Perhaps some of these, injured by your example, are now beyond your reach. They are already gone, where no word or prayer can help them: and so, like Esau of old, you can find *as concerns them* "no place for repentance, even though you seek it with tears." But something you may do, while seeking pardon through the blood of Jesus. You may redeem the time. You may help to rescue those, whose feet are still wandering upon the dark mountains. We lay this upon your conscience; not as any compensation for the sins of youth; but as a duty towards God, and out of gratitude to your Saviour, through whose blood you may find forgiveness, through whose intercession you have been spared.

It may be better, perhaps, not to enter more minutely into the details of the history of this Institution; but no one can fail to be interested in the following recollections supplied by the excellent lady who superintended it, which, while they describe some of the points of its management, illustrate in a remarkable degree the character of him to whom it owes its origin.

"My acquaintance with him, though not of many years' standing, was no ordinary one. I saw him daily under almost every variety of circumstances; and I ever saw the marks of the child of God, shining in his walk and conversation. Indeed there was a reality in his religion, such as I never saw elsewhere. His nearness to his Saviour seemed to bring heaven nearer to those with whom he conversed, and to give no faint idea of the perfect love that must be *there*. One remarkable trait, which struck me very much in his character, as so resembling his Master, was this—not merely a love for souls; but a watching, prayerful, anxious longing after each individual soul, brought under his notice, as if that were the only one to be saved. There was such a concentrated energy of purpose, bent upon that individual, which nothing could turn away, that he would follow up day after day some poor thing, for whom this interest was excited; and allow no other pursuit and no worldly impediment to turn him from it, until he saw his desire, through God's grace, accomplished: and hence it is that we are permitted now, in no common measure, to see so much blessing resting on his work and labour of love. The depth of his humility surpassed anything I ever met with. At times it was even painful. His letters were frequently written in such a spirit of self-abasement, that more than once I was compelled to entreat him to alter their tone. He would reply, that he felt it all, and even more than he had power to write; and that it often weighed upon his mind that perhaps he was a hinderer in God's work. And what shall I say to his unselfishness? Oh, it was so very uncommon! It was always a point with him to

spend as little as possible upon himself, that he might give the more to his Master's cause. 'I feel,' he would say, 'that I have nothing of my own. I myself and all I have are His who bought me; and willingly would I lay all at the feet of Jesus.'...I must say a few words, too, on his spirit of prayer. How few know what the Apostle's exhortation means, 'Pray without ceasing.' It was his breath, his life. He scarcely ever sent a letter without prayer, certainly never about the Home: for this, of all other things, lay most closely upon his heart. It may truly be said of him that *he expected great things of the Lord.* He was not contented with little things. Strong faith seems to require great answers: and they are given. Here is an instance. When a difficulty arose on account of our girls not being sufficiently well trained in the Home to enter into good families, he said, 'What a blessing it would be if some lady would undertake to receive them into her house, one by one, when they are fit to leave, and train them for superior places.' 'It would indeed,' I said; 'but I think it almost too much to expect.'—'Why so?' answered he; 'I do not think it is. There is nothing too great to expect when we remember that Christ died for sinners.' He always looked forward to this, and made it a subject of prayer. And now this prayer is being answered in a remarkable manner, in that God has put it into the heart of one of His children to undertake always to have a poor girl out of the Home in training. Another striking answer to prayer I will mention also particularly, since it bears upon our work. We appeared not only to need an outlet for our Home, such as I have described, but also a kind of Refuge prepa-

ratory to the poor girls coming into it; some place where they might be received at any moment, and if we are full (as we always are), remain for a few weeks as probationers. He used to pray for this: and such a refuge we now have. There is a man, in the east of Brighton, dwelling in one of the poorest streets, whose business every night takes him out into the road, where he is thus brought in contact with those who for any cause are brought from home after the usual hour. This man is a Christian. His history is most remarkable. I heard of him as follows:—One day a girl came to me; and when I asked, who sent her, she answered 'B. did. He gave me a tract, and urged me to flee from the wrath to come; and he told me that, if I would that night give up my sinful life, he would take me to his home, and his wife should take care of me. He sent me to you, ma'am.' This was not the only instance: another poor creature came one night, sent by him. His heart is especially drawn towards them. And we have now a little room, fitted up in his house for their reception. One has already passed from it to the Home: another is at the present time (July, 1857) under their care. How strange a thing, that one should be found, so adapted in every way for this work! I suppose, there cannot be found in Brighton, two persons better calculated for it than B. and his wife.

"Mr Wagner's fellow-feeling with others was most remarkable. He threw himself so entirely, as it were, into their case. For instance, a poor girl who had been in our Home was about to leave us to go to a situation: it was at Eastbourne. When she heard of this, she begged to decline.

'She could not bear the thought of going to Eastbourne.' When I asked her why: she said, 'it was so dull;' she had evidently a prejudice against the place, and could not make up her mind to go. I told him about it; and he said he should like to see her. They met in my room; and, sitting down opposite to her, he addressed her as follows: 'Ann, you do not like to go to Eastbourne; you think it so dull?' 'Yes, Sir.' 'Well, listen to me, and I will tell you something about myself. I remember my parents wishing to take me once with them to Brighton. I could not bear to go; I wanted to go abroad. I begged against it; but in vain. They wisely would not listen to me: so we came here. Now, God *met me here*. He had drawn me to this place against my will, that I might hear His Gospel; and then He opened my heart to receive it. I shall have to bless Him through eternity for that visit to Brighton. And now, may He not also have some great thing for you at Eastbourne?' She went there; and he several times went over to see how she was going on. I could not but mark how he taught her through himself; and this was always his way with the many poor wanderers, with whom he often prayed. They could not but feel, How this minister feels for me, when he puts himself so near me, taking a common standing-place to pray from. So different from the Pharisee!

"I ought not to omit telling you how, for nearly two years of his life, he spent almost every Sunday evening. The mothers of our poor girls at the Home had a standing invitation to my room to tea. I need not say how pleased they were to come. From seven to eight I met them, and we had tea together. At eight he came in;

and spent the following hour in expounding the Scriptures, and prayer. He went from mother to mother (our number gradually rose from three to fifteen); and asked each if she had not something to pray for. And then in his prayer which followed, he would remember each petition. I can remember many of these meetings distinctly; and the blessed effects and results of them were most evident. When obliged from illness to stay away, he would send a little note, which I read aloud. Many of the mothers were aged; all of them hard-working women. Some of them have said to me, that the only time they obtained for quiet thought during the whole week, was the hour they spent in this room. Few of them had ever been accustomed to go to church; but in the result many have become regular attendants at the house of God; and two of them he prepared himself for the Holy Communion, which he was permitted to administer to them for the first time."

The success granted to the Institution, conducted in this spirit of wisdom and love, appears to have been very great indeed even from the beginning. And this was seen, not only in the numbers which it attracted within its influence, but still more in the character of those which it sent forth. Many of those who were once inmates of the Home soon became respectable married women, practising consistently, as wives and mothers, the lessons which they learned in the Institution which sheltered them from ruin. But the great majority were sent out as servants to families who were willing to carry on the work of mercy: and year after year the managers of the Institution, while receiving from their former pupils touching proofs of lasting gratitude, and marking

decisive evidences of moral and spiritual change, have had the happiness to know that rarely, if ever, have their employers had cause to repent of the confidence they had shown. "Such, then, (writes one of his fellow-labourers) are some of the facts, which prove the remarkable success granted to this work. Those few, who knew how it was cradled and fostered in prayer, are not surprised at the results. The key to the whole may be found in the combination of prayer, and a sense of dependence and entire nothingness, with the most vigorous persevering and self-denying exertion. He laboured as though he thought his energy was to accomplish all; and prayed as though he were too weak to do anything of himself."

It was his practice, from the very beginning of this undertaking, to assemble all who were most deeply interested in the work, and engaged with him in the prosecution of it, on the evening of the second Monday in each month, for the purpose of solemn and special prayer to Almighty God for His blessing on their labours, and for His direction in all things which they should contemplate or take in hand. He attached the greatest importance to the maintenance of this devout practice; and one of the last and most touching entreaties which he made to his associates and assistants was, that they *never* would suffer it to be discontinued; for "by this (he said), more than all else, we stand."

Many instances have been already given, in this Memoir, of his constant use of prayer for others, and of the delight he took in it:—

Intercessory prayer (he said) is of all others the *highest kind* of prayer. Do you ask the reason? We

answer, Because it is the most *unselfish*. True religion is always an unselfish thing. One great purpose of the Gospel is to destroy self; and to give us the victory over it. . . . But there is another thought, which may serve perhaps, above every other, to impress our minds with the blessedness and elevation of intercessory prayer; and that is, that it is the only kind of prayer which our Great High Priest now offers within the veil. Even when He was on earth, nearly all His recorded prayers are those of intercession: and now, at His Father's right hand, He offers no other prayers than these. "He ever liveth, to make intercession for us." When, therefore, you plead with earnest intercession for others, it is then that your prayers are most like your Saviour's—then, that they are the nearest echo of His—then, that you are engaged in the selfsame way in which He is now engaged in heaven, and that your hidden life is most like His glorified life.

In spite of the facts which have been here adduced, of the pathetic narrative of the origin and progress of this undertaking, and of the strong convictions entertained and expressed by George Wagner and his associates, that the work which they were engaged in was unquestionably and unmixedly good, there will probably be some thoughtful minds who will pause, before binding themselves unreservedly to the same conclusion. They will think that the movement, so strongly developed in the present age, in favour of penitentiaries and reformatories, needs watching, if not checking; that there is danger lest the moral balance of society be disturbed, by the reaction which has followed long neglect of its erring and offending members. The advocates of such institutions do ill, when they shut their ears

to warnings, which it is wiser to listen to and consider; still more, when they denounce those who utter such warnings, as strangers to the spirit of charity by which their own hearts are moved. The subject is one which calls for the patient and observant investigation of our wisest Christian statesmen; nor must we flatter ourselves, that we have reached a point as yet from which we have only to go forwards as we have begun. It will not be expected from the biographer of George Wagner, that he should pretend to have arrived at the solution of such difficulties; or be prepared to uphold the plans which have been described, as altogether the best that have been devised among similar endeavours. It is a task at once more appropriate and more grateful, to point out the truly Christian spirit in which this undertaking was conceived, the judgment and devotedness with which it was conducted, and the blessing which has undoubtedly rested upon a work begun, continued, and ended with prayer.

And, furthermore,—whilst it may be allowed to express the conviction that, in whatever points the balance of society is disturbed by such endeavours, that balance should be restored, not by fainter exertions on the one side, but by larger and more generous efforts on the other—it is due to George Wagner to point out, in conclusion, with what comprehensiveness of purpose, and healthy force of moral feeling, he threw the weight of his energy upon both sides of the scale. This characteristic of his conduct has been noticed more than once already: but it must here be dwelt upon again, with greater emphasis, and more at length. To prevent, to shelter, to forearm, were always with him objects even higher

and dearer than those which he so zealously prosecuted in his efforts to recover and to restore. He only pressed upon the Church of Christ the duty of not neglecting the harder and more painful work. "This ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone," was his answer to objectors.

The special characteristic of our undertaking (he said in his first Report), as compared with some other works of a similar nature, is, that there is an Outdoor Mission, as well as a Home for Penitents. . . . And the object of the Mission embraces a wide range. It is not merely to pick up the fruit, when fallen; but also to endeavour so to shelter it from storm and tempest, that it shall not fall.

Justice will be best done to the plan which he contemplated, by quoting his own words from a memorandum which was found among his papers, and which served, it seems, as the preparation for an Address delivered by him, at an early stage of his proceedings, in the autumn of 1854, at a private meeting of the friends of the enterprise.

It is important for us ever to remember that Christianity is in its very nature aggressive. The kingdom of darkness is aggressive upon the kingdom of light: the kingdom of light must be aggressive on the kingdom of darkness. We have but a faint conception of the power and energy of Satan, and of the organized agencies which he has at his command. Whilst we are sitting in our rooms, surrounded by the comforts and many of the elegancies of life—whilst we are enjoying the Christian privileges, which God has granted us in such large measure—whilst we are feeling thankful, and (it may be) in some measure satis-

fied, to see large and attentive congregations in the house of God,—there are thousands who never enter a church; there are precious souls, who are being led away by the deep wiles of the devil; and scarcely an effort is made to save them. No isolated effort can ever cope with this gigantic evil. No success, and but little blessing can be expected, without earnest, sustained, and united efforts. Agency must be met by agency—organization by organization—the boldness of error by the confidence of truth. And in all we must depend for grace, for wisdom, for courage, on Jesus, and the power and the Spirit of God. In His might we may undauntedly attack the fortress of our great enemy.

Now we wish, at the outset, to point out one great mistake which is too often made. We often see a Penitents' Home established; and it is then thought that the work is done; whereas the truth is, that it is *scarcely begun.* A Home of that kind is a necessity: but we place *missionary work* far before it in importance. And the Home attains its true importance, not when it is regarded simply in itself, but when it is viewed as forming a basis of operations. What would the possession of Balaclava be without an army in the field to attack Sebastopol? Just what that little port is to our aggressive army, *that* a Penitents' Home is to the missionary efforts, which we invite you to put forth in your Master's name and strength. In suggesting to you a plan of operations, in a spirit of humility and love, we shall arrange our thoughts under two heads—measures of prevention, and measures of cure. And, further, we shall begin with those efforts which require less self-denial, and gradually ascend to those which require us to take up our cross daily.

We begin, first, with measures of prevention. Facts seem to prove that there is no single class which contributes so many cases to penitentiaries as that of female servants. This arises from many causes; and,

amongst others, from want of Christian watchfulness and judgment on the part of masters and mistresses. Among tradesmen, it seems to be not uncommon to discharge their servants without previous notice. In this way they are deprived of shelter, and exposed to great temptations, whilst looking out for another place. Amongst ourselves, this is not the custom. But it often happens that a servant is unable, between the time of notice and of quitting the place, to get another situation. And, if this be so, a master and mistress ought surely not to suppose that their responsibility entirely ceases when a servant leaves them, even though it be for some fault. They ought to see, as far as possible, that in leaving them they be not exposed to great temptations, and that a fault do not plunge them into great and ruinous sin.

Another thought has often struck us. It is, that, if mistresses sympathised more with their servants, and entered into their joys and sorrows, and so encouraged openness of mind on their part, much evil would be prevented. Servants are possessed of affections as well as others, and consequently *will* form attachments. These, when they do exist, are frequently ignored; partly (it may be) from the fear, on the part of the mistress, of losing a servant. But this kind of reserve can scarcely fail to operate in a prejudicial manner: whereas, if sympathy were shown, as it so often is in other classes of life,—if there were conversations on the subject with both parties,—and if, the attachment being desirable, encouragement were given, instead of hindrances being thrown in the way, there would evidently be fewer temptations to deceit, and fewer dangers of deceit leading to greater transgressions.

Another measure is the formation of classes, to be held on Sunday afternoon or evening, as the case may be, for young persons in shops, &c.; some of whom have come from the country, and have no friends or relations in Brighton. They are kept hard at work

all the week; and the consequence is, that too often Sunday is made a mere holiday: bad companionships are formed; and often ruin follows. Is there not reason to hope, that, if some part of the Sunday were employed in a useful way,—if they were to find some one who would act towards them as a friend and adviser, they might, through God's mercy, be kept from "the paths of the destroyer." The great point in these classes is to win the confidence of the young persons who attend. . . .

Another field of usefulness will be found among those young servants, especially, who are placed in charge of children. Very many may be found in the walks in and about Brighton. The best way to set about this part of the mission, would probably be to give them very simple tracts; and, when giving them, to take the opportunity to speak kindly to them, to give them counsel, and to warn them of their danger.

Let us proceed now to the measures of *cure:* the work more especially connected with the Penitents' Home.

We begin with one which is not the most important, or the most difficult; and that is, the supply and collection of funds for our Home. God has said, "The silver and the gold is mine." It is His; and we trust that He will provide it. . . .

A greater and more important part of this work, and one requiring more devotedness and faith, is direct missionary labour amongst the wanderers themselves. We believe that it will be found far more interesting and encouraging than many persons suppose. We forbear to go into details on this point; but much information will be given to any, whose hearts God may dispose to undertake it, by one who has already gained much experience in the work. . . .

And now, in looking at the objects proposed,—in thinking of so many, plunged in such appalling misery,—is there not enough to call forth our energies and

our compassion? The sin is, indeed, an awful one, in every way. We can scarcely wonder that the Mahometans visit it with punishment; and that the Jews cast out, completely and for ever, those who have so fallen. We cannot wonder at it: for they know of no "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." But we, the followers of Jesus, should be of another spirit. We should abhor the sin: but feel the deepest compassion for the sinner. The fountain which washes away our sins can wash away theirs. The grace which has rescued us from the grasp of Satan can rescue them. Will you not, then, take part in this work? There is a place for each and for all. Say what you will do. And oh! do not choose the easiest and lightest part of it; but, strengthened by the Spirit of Jesus, choose that which will cost you most self-denial.

True and noble words! commending themselves, surely, to the judgment and conscience of all, and carrying home a lesson of duty into every household, however sheltered from the sights and sounds amongst which the speaker's self-imposed exertions lay. The mission, indeed, as he understood it, and explained it, is a world-wide mission; one in which all may bear a part; which none can excusably decline, while upon them lie the responsibilities which servants or children bring. And is there not one department of the mission, not touched upon in the remarks just quoted, which, undertaken in a spirit of faith, and effectually carried out, may prove, through God's blessing, of more use than any other? It lies among that sex with whom, in almost every case, rests the guilt of originating temptation. Let Christian parents, tutors, ministers of the Church, (above all at the precious seed-time of confirmation,) endeavour, in dependence on the God of

grace and holiness, to awaken and guide the conscience, while yet it will answer to their call. There is no appeal, to which they may more confidently anticipate an answer from within: and who can calculate the consequences of wise, and pure, and strengthening counsel, rooted in the heart before it be too late? Alas! till the plague is stayed on this side, "the sin of great cities" will continually gather its thousands of victims still.

We must hasten to a conclusion. And yet some results must be briefly mentioned, which have been vouchsafed to the *Mission* at Brighton, as distinguished from the Home. Some account has already been given of the number of those who were rescued from this life of sin during the time this Memoir embraces. Fuller particulars will be found in the published Reports. But a still more striking result was the breaking up of several dens of iniquity, not by the arm of the law, but by the resistless power of conscience forcing the proprietors to abandon their unhallowed gains. The last recorded case of this sort was that of a woman, who had been engaged in this agency of evil for many years in the town: but who, by God's blessing on the labours of His faithful servants, was brought to repentance and newness of life. Nothing less can be said of this woman than that *out of her went seven devils.* "The last work of our dear departed friend in this part of his ministry," writes the Lady Superintendent, "was praying with this poor lost creature, and praising God for her as one found. I shall never forget his earnestness. It seemed as though he knew it was his last work. This was on the Saturday, and he left on Monday, never to return." The woman in

question took her departure from Brighton, and sought a home among the relations from whom she had separated herself; where she has ever since been proving her sincerity by a life of quiet humble industry, and is now a communicant in the Church.

Such were the fruits of George Wagner's labours in this department, even in his lifetime. The Institution which he founded remains, to preserve his memory, and to carry on his work.

CHAPTER VII.

LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

1856—1857.

THE spring and summer of 1854 had been a period of extraordinary fatigue and excitement to George Wagner. The conflict of feeling which preceded his determination to establish the Penitents' Home, the difficulties he had to encounter, and the great exertions that it was necessary to make, proved more than his feeble strength was able to sustain. For, during all this time, besides the unceasing calls of his ordinary parish work, he was actively engaged in completing his plans for the building of St Stephen's Schools. His friends saw with alarm that his health was failing; and he himself not only felt the absolute necessity for rest, but was led to reflect with more than even his usual solemnity on the uncertainty of his own life, and to make special provision, in event of his death, for the continuance of the work he was engaged in. Rest and change, however, restored him wonderfully. Instead of attempting, as usual, a pedestrian tour (to which he was utterly unequal), he went with his sisters to the English lakes, and settled down in a little cottage on the shore of Derwentwater. Here he still occupied himself earnestly with business about "the Home," maturing his plans, and shaping his course, at the most critical

period of its development; while daily recovering the health and strength which he had lost. The pure mountain air, and the perfect retirement of his quiet cottage, soon acted with restoring power upon his exhausted frame: and, before many weeks were passed, he found himself able to take a walk of twenty-four miles, including the ascent of Scafell Pike, and was all the better for the exertion. Many hours were spent upon the lake; and he availed himself largely, besides, of the opportunities offered him by the country for continuing his favourite pursuits of botany and geology. Nor was the refreshment of congenial society wanting: he would row across to the hospitable house of Mr Henry Marshall, and to other friends, who lived near the head of the lake; and would go still more frequently to the Parsonage; and though the lakes had by that time lost nearly all the great men whose names have made them famous in literature, he had the pleasure of making acquaintance with the widows of Wordsworth, of Dr Arnold, and of the Rev. Frederick Myers of Keswick; and with Miss Kate Southey, daughter of the poet. At the end of August, thankful for his restoration, and with renewed vigour, both of body and of mind, he returned to Brighton; for he always made it a point to be back at his post by the first Sunday in September, to begin his yearly course of Children's Sermons; and his friends observed, with fresh hopefulness and trust, that the danger they apprehended had apparently passed away. The autumn was marked not only by the establishment of the Home, but by the institution of the classes already described for female servants and for the German musicians.

In January, 1855, the death of his dear and honoured friend, Archdeacon Hare, called him to Herstmonceux.

I can scarcely express what I felt to-day (he wrote to Mrs Hare), when I heard that it had pleased God to remove him from earth to heaven. Ill as he had long been, it came as a thunderclap. It is like the removal of a father—the kindest of fathers. What must it be to you? . . . It is almost impossible to realise the loss, so great and unspeakable, to the Church at large—to all who knew him—to those whom he had admitted into the sacred bonds of friendship; but most of all to you. . . . The remembrance of one so affectionate, large-hearted, and noble, will ever lie very deep in my spirit. Oh that, as God takes away those whom we love, He may fill us more and more with Christ! I need not say that my feeble prayers will be and are offered up for you, that God may support you in this hour of bereavement. It is a very strong wish of my heart, to join with my lips in the touching prayers which will be offered [at the funeral], and to look forward to our reunion in the presence of Jesus, where he is now, seeing Him whom he loved face to face.

He was one of the eight clergymen who were selected to bear the pall at the funeral; and the following week he poured out his heart in his own church at St Stephen's, in a tribute of respect and affection to the departed, leading on his own thoughts and those of his congregation to the spirit in which the Christian should anticipate death, and mark "the loosening of this or that cord in his tabernacle;" knowing that "the changes of which the world dares not think, to which it longs to close its eyes, are but the harbingers of a life, in which there is no change,

save from glory to glory." Such "loosenings of the cords" of his own tabernacle were again beginning to show themselves. His cough, to which he was always more or less liable, was more than usually troublesome that winter; and did not disappear, as it commonly did, with the return of warmer weather in the spring. After the trying work of Easter, he was obliged to withdraw to St Leonard's, for something longer than his usual rest. The following letter was addressed to the Lady Superintendent of the Home.

St Leonard's, April 14, 1855.

Though resting, I have often been with you in your work and labour of love. *Your* turn to rest will soon come, I trust. You will be glad to hear that I am feeling quite fresh, and ready for work. How gracious is God in renewing our strength, physical and spiritual! I have had a delightful, though solitary, walk this afternoon. The gentle breeze from the south seemed to revive everything—a type of the Spirit's work upon the soul. Everything is very backward—no wild flowers, save the few ferns which have been enabled to live through all the winter's cold and snow, reminding us of those who, through God's grace, are kept in all the severe conflicts of this wintry life, unto the outburst of that eternal spring which no winter will succeed. . . .

I have been reading very vigorously—a great enjoyment—one a most extraordinary book, of wonderful power, called *Catholic Thoughts**; the other, a

* By the Rev. Frederick Myers. Given him by Mrs Myers. The book was printed "for private distribution only." In a letter to another of his friends, George Wagner says of this work—"It is a noble book; one of the noblest and wisest that I ever read." Those who know the contents of this remarkable work (which it is still judged unadvisable to give to the public)

book which you would like, a biography, *The Earnest Student; or, Life of John Mackintosh.*

Oh, how I shall miss being with my dear, dear flock to-morrow! No church is like St Stephen's. My heart is there, and will be often lifted up to God for a large and abundant blessing. I do not forget *you* in my poor prayers, my dear sister, or *our* work; or, as we would rather say, *God's* work. Prosper it, O merciful Redeemer!

In July he once more retired to St Leonard's; but, though revived by rest, and by the increasing warmth of summer, he felt that he was not likely to get rid of his cough without an entire change of climate. This year, as before, his summer holiday was taken in the company of his sisters; as he felt himself unequal to the greater exertions which he had been accustomed to make. They chose Normandy and Brittany as the scene of their excursions; the former province, with all its recollections of William the Conqueror, proving especially interesting to a Sussex man; and the latter, with its geological peculiarities, its Celtic remains, and mediæval superstitions, presenting no less rich a field for thought and observation. His cough soon disappeared in the dry air of France; but, finding that violent exercise was no longer suitable to him, he confined himself for some time to the lovely neighbourhood of Dinan; from which town he returned, at his usual time, by way of St Malo and Jersey, to Brighton.

The following letter is one of those which he wrote during this absence from England:—

will require no further proof how much George Wagner was raised above the unworthy prejudices, which close the mind against reasonable enquiry, and condemn concessions to truth as rationalistic and unchristian.

TO MRS * * * * * *.

Dinan, Aug. 11, 1855.

It is now scarcely more than a fortnight since we left home, and yet it seems a very long time. We have seen a great deal in the time; and, through God's mercy, have enjoyed ourselves much. The day on which we left Brighton the sea was like a lake, so still and waveless: but there was a thick fog. We almost ran aground on the French coast, at a point about four miles from our destination, Dieppe. Sailors were sent on shore to find out where we were, as no one could see above a few yards. The sensation arising from this ignorance, the cries of the wild sea-birds, and now and then a glimpse of a huge cliff for a moment, magnified as it always is by the fog, was very solemn. I felt that there was another Pilot besides the one that stood at the rudder—One who is never baffled. How often in life are we situated spiritually as we thus were outwardly—unable to see our way, obliged every moment to cast out our line, and fathom the depth of the water. But Jesus is our faithful guide—one who will never leave us or forsake us. What are fogs and darkness when we are in His loving hands? . . . The churches in Normandy are most beautiful. The country is very interesting, in consequence of its connexion with England. The scenery, especially here, is lovely. There are beautiful walks in every direction about this sweet place. On Monday I walked twenty-six miles—a sign, you will think, I am better than when I left home; and so, through God's mercy, I am. There are many wild flowers, though not very rare; and this is an unfailing source of enjoyment. As yet I have not preached. . . . Need I say, that I do not forget *our* great work at home? Oh, no! Every day, in my secret chamber, and in my walks, I remember it; and I ask (would I could do so with more earnestness!), that the Spirit

of God may be more abundantly poured out on our Home, and on all connected with it. Glad shall I be to be at work again, helping my dear sister in her labours, and sympathising with her in her difficulties. . . . Write to me soon, and tell me how you are, and all about the work. Have you had change and rest? If not, do take some. Let a brother's persuasion and *example* prevail.

But his cough, which he had got rid of for a while, came on again about a week after his return: and as he felt more and more that his work was growing too much for him, he paid short visits throughout the autumn to St Leonard's or to Eastbourne, to give himself the necessary rest which it seemed impossible to secure at Brighton. His care for his health, in this respect, deserves to be noticed. He was guilty of no reckless or fanatical sacrifice of his life; as perhaps some, who knew him but slightly, may have thought that he was. If he overworked himself (as it is impossible not to feel was the case), it was not deliberately, not out of an unwise disregard of obvious consequences: it was partly from the pressure of circumstances which he could not control, and at the call of some duty which he thought must be met without looking beyond the immediate urgent present; partly because, when deeply interested in his work, the fervour of his zeal and the happiness he felt in action made him consider himself mistakenly to be stronger than he really was. Besides, his habitual self-denial, and the strictness with which he judged his own motives, led him ever to suspect backwardness and self-indulgence; when natural inclination was only pleading for the rest, which

prudence really prescribed. "Work here; rest in heaven," was a maxim continually on his lips; and sometimes, too, when the conviction was forced upon him that his life would be a short one, it seemed to him right and wise, and according to God's will no less than his own ardent desire, that he should effect as much as possible before "the night cometh wherein no man can work."

This autumn was the time at which, after many disappointments and delays, he succeeded in opening the Schools which, by his energy and perseverance, he had given to St Stephen's district: and the occasion necessarily brought much additional exertion upon him. When the needful arrangements connected with this were accomplished, he retired for a few days to St Leonard's, to rest. A letter, written during this interval, will show the spirit he was still (as ever before) maintaining, and the hopes with which he looked forward:—

TO MRS STOW*.

St Leonard's, Dec. 13, 1855.

It is very long since we have had any communication with each other. Still, this silence is no proof, I am sure, of any forgetfulness. I never doubt the Christian love and sympathy of my suffering sister. It grieved me, my dear friend, to hear from Mrs —— that you have been so ill, and are still so weak. Doubtless, you feel that this trial is not to be named with greater ones; still it must be painful, as it separates you, in measure at least, from your children. How very often does God lay his hand upon you! It

* The widow of his first curate. (See Chap. III.)

must often seem as if He were grinding the stone to powder! And yet it is not so. He is removing all its rough places, and is fitting it, as a precious jewel, for the crown of His beloved Son in glory. The severity of the process shows, indeed, our depravity; but it shows us also a sweeter truth—the unchanging love of our Heavenly Father, who will not leave us as we are, but will, by every means, conform us to the image of His beloved Son.

I am now staying for a few days at St Leonard's. My work has been too much of late; as, in addition to that which was, I have lately opened my schools, and a reading-room for working men. May God grant His blessing! My throat, too, has been troublesome—rather ulcerated; but this is a very trifling thing. I hope to return on Saturday, and renew work.

On his return to work, however, the hopes which he cherished for himself, were not realised. He got worse rather than better; and during the short visit he paid to his family in February, 1856, he expressed his persuasion to his mother that he should not live long, adding that he "must work whilst it was day." She was greatly affected at hearing this; but he appeared refreshed by his brief holiday, and returned to Brighton decidedly better.

Easter fell early that year (March 23). As was his invariable custom, he delivered a course of daily Lectures during Passion-week, taking as his subject, the prophecies of Zechariah concerning the Saviour. These Lectures seem to have been peculiarly impressive that year. They came home with power to the hearts of many of his congregation; and besides those who were strengthened and confirmed in faith, and roused to greater

exertions in the cause of God, several (as there is good reason to believe) were awakened to newness of life, through the convictions then first produced within them.

He bore the fatigues of the week better than could have been anticipated; but was prevailed upon to give himself a few days' rest, after his Easter exertions. Accordingly, he paid a visit to a friend in the neighbourhood of London, hoping to come back refreshed, on the following Sunday, to resume his ordinary duties. In this journey, however, he caught a cold, which brought on an attack of bronchitis; in spite of which he returned to Brighton on the Sunday to preach at the Church of St John the Baptist, Hove, in behalf of the Home. In the afternoon also he preached at St Stephen's. These were the last acts of his public ministry. The state of his throat, and of his voice, convinced him that it was necessary to recur to the remedies of rest and change; and he returned immediately, for this purpose, to his family at St Leonard's. Little, however, did he or others think that he had now left Brighton for ever. A few days, it was hoped, would suffice to remove the mischief; and he went away in the highest spirits, confidently trusting that he should soon be permitted to return. *Four days* was the time which he fixed: and one of his Brighton friends remembers how, after taking leave, with the expression of this expectation, he ran up-stairs again, before going into the street, merely to open the drawing-room door, and playfully hold up four fingers; and then disappeared again, before a word could be said on either side. His own letters now may be left to tell the story.

TO MRS STOW.

St Leonard's, April 2, 1856.

I enclose a few lines to Mr ——, to thank him for his little work on the emblems of Scripture. You will not suspect, I hope, that it is from a want of brotherly love and sympathy that I have been silent, and have now to reply to *two* letters. There has been so much to consecrate our friendship, that it will last unimpaired till death; and even, thank God, *beyond* the grave. Do you not believe that that touching scene on the cross, in which Jesus gave His bereaved mother another son, is constantly repeated; and that Jesus now, at the foot of the same cross, establishes relationships and friendships, which nothing shall be able to break up? It *does* seem to me as if I had heard those gentle words from *His* lips, "*Behold thy sister*—one with whom I have called thee to sympathise, for whom I bid thee pray."

Our Heavenly Father knows how much we need sympathy in this cold world—the sympathy of His people, to lead us onward and upward to *His* sympathy, which alone can satisfy the heart. Oh that we had more love and sympathy in our hearts! Then this world would be a happier one than it is. It is awful to think how unlike Christ we are.

I do not wonder, my dear friend, at your still walking in deep waters. Your Father has led you, and still leads you, along a thorny path. But it is sweet to think that it *is* your Father who is leading you. He has demanded of you more than common sacrifices—the complete surrender of your will in intense suffering. And why? Because he loves you with an everlasting love, and wishes to fill you with *Himself*. He has emptied your vessel, leaving scarce a drop at the bottom, that He may fill you with Jesus. I trust this loving Jesus may be your all in all. Oh, I long to lay my stubborn will at His feet—

I long to have Him reign in every thought of my mind, and every affection of my heart. I long to lay myself down at the foot of His cross, to be dealt with as He sees fit, if only it may be for His glory. But alas! self and inward corruption are strong, and clouds from below often darken the light that comes from above.

I have been thinking much lately about a spirit of self-sacrifice. It is an easy thing to be called a Christian; but to follow Jesus—to take up the cross daily—to deny our corrupt wills, and even offer up our lawful affections, as Abraham did—these are the true tests of our hearts; and, if found, are precious proofs that we are following His example. Do you not feel, my sister, that you want a deeper teaching of the Spirit? None can tell how much *I* want it, that I may know the fulness and unsearchable riches of Christ.

Christ's work continues to be full of interest. The Home seems to prosper. Our prayers have been wonderfully answered, weak as they are. The schools are also going on well, and have been blessed already. There have been also some interesting inquiries lately. Passion Week was one of much blessing to my own soul. We took as our subject the prophecies of Zechariah concerning Jesus: "The entry into Jerusalem" (ix. 9). "Jesus, King and Priest—the Builder of the Temple" (vi. 12, 13). "The blood of the Covenant" (ix. 11, 12). "Looking to a pierced Saviour" (xii. 10). "The Fountain opened" (xiii. 1). "The smitten Shepherd" (xiii. 7).

I have been suffering more than usual lately, and feel my strength to be less than it was. . . .

TO MRS HARDCASTLE.

St Leonard's, April 22, 1856.

Many thanks for your kind letter. Most truly rejoiced am I to hear that, through God's mercy, you

have recovered from your attack. For myself, the irritation in the bronchial glands still continues, and is not likely to leave me till the east winds cease. And the constant confinement to the house has prevented my regaining my strength. I have had, too, occasional feverish attacks, which are very weakening. But all this is a very gentle discipline, and one certainly needed. And, much as I love my work, I desire to be fully submissive to my Father's will. Indeed, the Christian ought to be more than submissive; he should be *cheerful*,—cheerful in work, and cheerful when compelled to rest. Paul had learned of the Spirit to take *pleasure* in infirmities. And the Hebrews took *joyfully* the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven an enduring substance. But we Englishmen are, I fear, given to grumble more than others. Grace, however, can overcome national as well as individual defects, and can bring our stubborn wills into harmony with God's will.

TO THE REV. JAMES VAUGHAN.

St Leonard's, April 29, 1856.

My dear Friend,

We have succeeded at last in getting a certificated mistress for St Stephen's Schools. It is not very convenient for her to come so early as Whitsuntide; but I feel so lively an interest in Mrs Blower, that it would take a much greater difficulty than this to make me stand in her way, when so great an advantage is opened to her. . . .

Thank you for your kind wishes. This long silence, and the prospect of its continuance, is not without trial; but I have long felt that, delightful as God's work is, His *will* is still more precious. The one we should be ever ready to lay down; from the other, nothing shall separate us. What a greatness and grandeur there is in the will of God, and its most glorious expression—the cross of Christ! How small

do our puny plans and labours look; when we see it—not altogether, for this is beyond us—but in part, as it is. My great desire is to "be still;" and, like David, to have my soul kept "as a weaned child;" longing only to glorify my Redeemer, in silence or in work, as He sees fit.

I remain, my dear Friend and Father in Christ,
Yours very affectionately,
GEORGE WAGNER.

TO A FORMER MEMBER OF HIS "SERVANTS' BIBLE CLASS."

St Leonard's, April, 1856.

Dear Eliza Parry,

It gave me great pleasure to receive your kind letter, which was put into my hands just as I was leaving Brighton. My Father's gentle hand has been laid upon me, as it was laid upon you; only in a more gentle manner. . . . I feel the separation from my beloved flock very much; but it is good that I should feel it. I am quite contented, and desire that my Father's will may be done. It often seems to me that, sweet as His *work* is, we should love His *will* still better. What peace it gives the soul, when the grace of God enables us simply to leave ourselves in His hands, willing to work or rest, suffer or be at ease, live or die, as He may see fit. We are His, and not our own; and to live realising this is the happiest life, and one that best glorifies God.

I am very thankful to hear that you are gradually getting better, though the cold winds must have tried you. Take due care of yourself. We have not forgotten you on our class evening, but have endeavoured to bear you and —— on the wings of our prayers into the presence of Jesus. Oh that our wings were stronger, and that we could rise higher—high as the eagle, which fixes its eye upon the sun, and soars towards it! This is the way, the only way to rise—fixing the eye on Jesus.

Two or three interviews, which he had at the end of this month, with persons who called on him upon business, connected with his Schools, and with the Home, seem to have caused him too much exertion; and as the weather continued unfavourable, he became decidedly worse. The irritation of his throat was so great, that his medical attendant forbade him even to speak; and all communication with those about him was for a long time carried on by means of a slate, on which he wrote whatever he desired to say. His strength, too, was sadly prostrated; and he was obliged to lie down for the greater part of the day. He spent much of his time in reading, especially Christian biographies; and was particularly delighted with the lives of Madame de la Mothe Guyon, and of Mrs Winslow. He still kept up his correspondence also; writing notes in pencil from his couch, when he was unable or forbidden to sit up for the purpose. The following, two of them addressed to the Lady Superintendent of the Home, are written in pencil.

TO MRS * * * * * *.

St Leonard's, May 12, 1856.

The poor girl is twenty-nine.... This is too old for our Home. I am not authorized to say it; but I have no doubt that £5 would be raised for her, as she is most anxious to escape from her wretched life.

You will be grieved to hear that bronchitis has again attacked me; and the little strength which I gained so slowly, is already well-nigh gone. But if God is the strength of my heart, all will be well. And I believe that He will enable me to endure to the end, though the exercise of patience is great. When you write to me, let it be—not of "labours

more abundant," to which my heart is prone enough,—but of Jesus, and resignation to the will of God. These things feed my soul: others excite hopes, which a breath of cold air sweeps away; and, moreover, they are productive of conflicts. What I want is to abide wholly in Jesus.

TO MRS SIDNEY GURNEY.

May, 1856.

I should have written to you before, dear Mrs Gurney, to thank you for your kind letter, had I not been *very* weak. Bronchitis and fever brought me so low, that at one time I thought that my Heavenly Father would soon take me home,—a blessed prospect: yet such was the prostration of body and mind, that my chief consolation was to know that Jesus held me fast, and would never let me go. But now it seems to be God's will to raise me up again. To what? I seem to hear a voice saying to me, "I called thee, unworthy as thou art, to be a fellow-worker with my beloved Son: now I call thee, unworthy as ever, to the higher privilege of *suffering* with Him." Welcome, the cup of bitterness! because Thou, my Saviour, wilt come with it, and fill it with Thine own sweetness. I am sure that, if it pleases God to lay me aside from work for some time, or altogether, you will pray that I may possess my soul in patience, and "be still." May the Lord bless you and your house. My Christian regards to Mr Gurney.

TO MRS * * * * * *.

May 23, 1856.

..... It is not any mysterious feeling of my own, or any present sufferings (for I have none but weakness), that led me to speak of my future life as one of suffering. It is, rather, that I anticipate separation from my beloved flock. My doctor recommends me,

as soon as weather and strength permit, to go to France, to endeavour to get rid of my cough. After that, he thinks that I may return to Brighton; but that I shall not be able to preach. And then, he thinks it necessary that I should go to the south of Spain for the winter. You know, my dear sister, that this is no light cross to flesh and blood. And yet, to the eye of faith the future looks quite bright. Oh, how sweet is the will of God!

There are many reasons why I *do not wish this mentioned as yet*..... The step might prove unnecessary. God may open some other door. I have heard nothing about the Home so long, I want to hear about the penitent who died. It does not tire me to *read* letters: it is writing that I find more fatiguing. ..... It would be a relief to my mind, if you would send me the account which I owe you. Let *every thing* be put down, including marriages*. I will send a cheque. Will you also take possession of the Home cash-box and the account books?.... Some one should be appointed secretary *pro tempore*.

It will be seen from these letters, that the plan now in contemplation for him was that, after spending some time in France, he should proceed to the south of Spain to pass the winter. With his usual energy, as soon as he had in some measure recovered from the prostration consequent on his late attack, he sent for a Spanish grammar and began studying the language. At this time

* This alludes to a practice which he adopted in connexion with the *Mission* at Brighton, of facilitating marriages by himself defraying the expense. He discovered that in many cases the want of money, even to pay the marriage fees, was a real obstacle in the way of an intended union; and that the delay, thence arising, often led to sin: and in many cases (not only within his own district, but in other parts of Brighton also) he obviated the mischief by supplying the required funds himself.

also he composed, while lying on his couch, a little Latin hymn, which was found among his papers, bearing date, May 25, 1856. It was no doubt a relief to his active mind to embody the prevailing thoughts of his heart in such a form as this, while denied the free use of writing materials. The hymn, with some defects, has very great beauty; and has caught no small portion of the spirit of St Bernard and of Robert of France, while expressing with unimitative sincerity the genuine aspirations of his own heart. If the very first line be pronounced a blemish, let it be considered that in all probability it suggested the Latin form of the whole hymn which follows.

Jesu, vino dulcior; (Cant. I. 2.)
Jesu, caris carior:
Fidis et fidelior:
Cor ingratum fac tuum.

Durum est—muta spiritu:
Vile est—imple gratiâ:
Nigrum est—O, fac candidum,
Lucens luce cœlitus.

O, quam Tecum diligo
Oves, pastor, pascere;
Quot vagantes, quærere;
Quot inventos ducere.

Doce, quod sublimius—
Doce, Tecum, Dux, pati;
Doce sub silentio
Crucem ferre fortiter.

Si crux cor gravissimè
Premat, terat, vulneret,—
Jesu veni cum cruce,
Et me pone sub cruce.

Tuo fortis robore,
Tuâ dives gratiâ,
Plenus plenitudine,
Triumphabo per crucem.

Et cum cursus curritur,
Et sunt plena gaudia,
Levis crux mutabitur
In coronam gloriæ.

A translation may not be unacceptable to some readers :—

Jesus, sweeter far than wine;
Friend, who deignest to be mine;
Faithful Thou, and Thou alone:
Make this thankless heart Thine own!

It is stubborn—bend it, Lord:
Vile—oh, cleanse it through Thy word!
Black—oh, make it pure and white,
Shining down with heavenly light!

Sweet it is with Thee to keep,
Gracious Lord, Thy ransomed sheep;
Warning, guiding those that stray;
Tending those that love Thy way.

Teach me now a loftier strain—
School my heart to conquer pain;
Teach me silently to share
That sharp cross which Thou didst bear.

What though soon its death-like smart
Wound, and pierce, and rend my heart,—
Jesus, Saviour, be Thou nigh;
Place me, Lord, on Calvary!

Fill'd with fulness drawn from Thee,
Strength which Thou hast won for me,
Strong in weakness—rich in loss—
I shall triumph through Thy cross.

And when once the race is run,
And the crown of glory won,
Light will seem the cross I bore,
Changed to bliss for evermore.

Early in June he was moved to his brother's house, at Seddlescombe, near Battle, with the hope that the change might prove of benefit to him. And so it did for a while. The following letters, written no longer in pencil, speak at first of reviving strength and hope.

TO MRS ******.

Seddlescombe, June 11, 1856.

I cannot say I was surprised at your letter being dated from Brighton. But, though I am very anxious to hear from you again *very* soon, I hope the next address will be *Malvern*..... You are scarcely ever likely to be without one or two of these interesting cases. I deeply sympathize with you in the consciousness of sin..... My sins often seem to me infinite in number, and scarlet in guilt.... But despair?—never. Never, till God sweeps away His own unchangeable promises, and obliterates the cross of His beloved Son—never, whilst Jesus lives, and is *what* He is, tender and mighty to save. Humiliation is of God: and, oh, I long to lie lower before Him,—to be subdued, lowly, and still. But despair is of Satan; and we cannot resist it too earnestly.....With regard to myself, I wish to leave myself in my Father's hands. It would be very blessed to join the company above, and its glorious Head, at once. But, if it were the Lord's will, I would gladly live a thousand years in this sinful world, in the endeavour to save souls. I sympathize greatly with Henry Martyn's strong saying: "I know no heaven on earth, but in preaching the gospel." Of course he included communion with Jesus, which has made my silent illness such a blessing to me. I still continue to gain strength. Your accounts of the penitents cheered me greatly.

TO MRS S. GURNEY.

Great Saunders, Seddlescombe, June, 1856.

. . . . . I am now in the fourth month of my illness. Little did I think when I left Brighton for four days, that it would be more than four months before I should return thither again. But God's thoughts are not as our thoughts; and well may we praise Him that they are not; and though sickness has its trials, and for me *one* very great one, yet so very gracious has God been to me, that its sting has been drawn; and He is teaching me lessons of resignation, patience, and cheerfulness, under the cross; which are not to be learned without it. And now, dear Mrs Gurney, I must tell you of the trial which God has in reserve for me—one far greater than any of the accompaniments of sickness. Both the medical men that have attended me successively say that I ought not to stay in England this winter—and my judgment coincides with theirs. You know well how I feel in leaving my work and precious flock. Our Father knows *where* to touch the hearts of His children. And His touch is rending many chords in mine. But His healing touch will not be wanting: for "He is faithful who has promised." I am getting gradually better; but the progress is very slow. But this, too, is ordered of the Lord. Give my warm Christian affection to Mr Gurney, and love to your little ones.

TO THE REV. R. R. TATHAM, DALLINGTON.

Great Saunders, July 11, 1856.

My dear Friend,

Very many thanks to you for your kind, sympathizing letter, and for all the words of consola-

tion which it contained. Mine, like yours, has been a long illness; though yours must have been more full of suffering. I am now in the fourth month of my illness. Through God's great mercy, I am somewhat better, though still very weak, and not allowed to speak on account of my cough. But God has been exceeding abundant in mercy, and has given me much of that peace which passeth all understanding: so that, notwithstanding the sore trial of separation from my work and flock, it has been the happiest period of my life; one which has led me deeper into things unseen, especially the fulness and sufficiency of Jesus and His atonement, and the glory and preciousness of God's will. How beautiful are the words, "I delight to do Thy will." It is not only *submit*, but *delight*. Oh, ought we not to be like Jesus in this, and to delight in God's will, even when His appointments are painful to flesh and blood? I have a great cross before me: I am obliged to leave England for the winter, and go South. . . . . Give my Christian regards to Mrs Tatham. Mrs N. was very suffering, when I last heard from her, but very peaceful.

While staying here at his brother's house, he resumed the practice, which for many years he had dropped, of keeping a journal. In the busy days of Brighton, and even of Dallington, no one can wonder that he discontinued this. His was a life of action, rather than of contemplation; at least his contemplations found their expression—besides the habits of daily devotion, which were never intermitted or diminished—in the Sermons which, week by week, he composed. But now, in the evening of his days,—evening as he felt it to be, though still so early; for the shadows were lengthening across his path,—he resumed the habit; and continued it, though with interruptions, and latterly in a different strain, to the end

of his life. The opening of this journal, and some extracts from it, are here given.

I have now been ill about ten weeks. When first seized with bronchitis, I expected from week to week to recover, and return to my work. Afterwards, my illness became serious, and I was too ill to put down my thoughts. But now, being somewhat stronger, and yet having the prospect of much illness and suffering before me, I think it may be profitable to my soul briefly to review the past, and then to note the signs of my spiritual state day by day.

What has God taught me by means of this illness?

The most prominent points are:

1. The faithfulness of Jesus. I have seen more, I trust, of the glory of His work and person; and have realized more vividly His presence with me. On one occasion, when fever had so reduced my strength that I was unable to think and even consciously lay hold on Him, my Father enabled me to realize that the arms of Jesus were underneath me, and that He was too faithful to remove them. When stronger, on several occasions His presence has seemed to meet my spirit. Once He seemed so very near, that I involuntarily held out my arms; and then, in consequence of the weakness of my nervous system, burst into a flood of tears.

2. The will of God. This had long been my stay. The looking direct to it was my chief consolation when I left my first beloved flock. But it is one thing to look to the will of God, under such circumstances; and another, when earth seems passing away, and eternity drawing near. I seem to have felt a direct teaching of God's Spirit, carrying me deeper into the will of God. Oh, how *grand* it is! What are our puny plans when viewed in its light! Oh, how *lovely* it is! Was it not the loveliness of God's will that led Jesus, in the word of prophecy, to say,

"I delight to do thy will!" It is so *perfect*, that I may always trust it—and so *wise*, that every appointment, however trying to flesh and blood, must be right. And when I realize all these perfections in the Divine Will, how consoling it is to think that God's will is *sovereign*—that it must eventually triumph over every impediment. Oh, my Father! teach me to *delight* in thy will—not only to submit to it, but to delight in it!

One happy result of this merciful teaching of my Heavenly Father has been, that since my more serious attack, I have been free from those disturbing *wishes* which so sadly distract the mind. Things which at other times would have excited very strong wishes, produced no effect whatever. The consequence was sweet peace—I wanted nothing but what my Heavenly Father gave me. My great dread is, that (if spared) returning health should expose me again to distracting cares and wishes. And yet, if I watch, and give myself to more earnest prayer, will not God, by his Spirit, keep my heart? My great desire and effort should be, to live nearer to Jesus, and to walk with him.

The plan of reading I have adopted is, a text of Scripture while dressing. This is usually a sad time. I am often weak and depressed; and the prey of wandering thoughts, which do my mind much harm. After breakfast I read the prophet Isaiah, (ch. xl. to the end,) connectedly, for about an hour. . . . Lastly, from half-past six to eight, I read the Greek Testament; and intercede for my precious flock and friends. These have been my sweetest hours.

Before going to bed, weakness will not allow me to do more than read a short psalm, and offer up a prayer, commending myself into my Father's hands. But alas! as, when I laboured, I did not get all the good from the heavenly employment which I ought

to have got, so it is now that the ground is laid fallow. Oh, that larger supplies of the Spirit would descend from the hand of Jesus on my heart! . . .

Another point relating to the employment of time. When very ill, I read only light, though improving books, chiefly biographies. But for some weeks I have commenced a course of connected reading, with a view to collect notes to elucidate the Articles for the use of teachers. I sometimes fear that this may engross my thoughts too much, and draw them off from the higher aim and end of life—conformity to the image of Jesus. At present my feeling is, that if it were God's will that I should throw all that I have written into the fire, it would not cost me a pang. I only desire to proceed with it if it shall lead to His glory. But I feel that I must watch and pray, and shut up my books whenever they begin to engross.

The work here spoken of was one eminently characteristic of George Wagner. In its ultimate form, as is seen in the part which he had completed before his death, it was to be a manual of Catechetical instruction to be used by teachers with classes of young children. The instruction is thrown accordingly into the form of question and answer; the questioner often pausing to assume a hortatory tone; explaining a difficult point in familiar language, and by lively illustrations; and referring copiously at every step to Scripture. To produce a little work like this, nothing more would be needed (one should think) than such learning as any clergyman might possess, with diligent and special study of the Bible, added to plain sense, and an affectionate appreciation of children's modes of thought. But so judged not George Wagner. To raise this simple superstructure, he employed labour and thought which most

men would think sufficient for a far more ambitious object. The connected course of reading, which he speaks of, was carried on in the following way:—He kept two note-books by him as he read. One was a common-place book, in which he transcribed passages that struck him, or noted down references which he wished to preserve, in the authors whom he consulted: and this common-place book he seems to have had many years by him; and to have used with a special view to the illustration of the Articles, during the time when he was preparing and delivering his catechetical lectures on that subject. The other was a book divided into thirty-nine sections (the margin cut away, as in a ledger, so that each section was accessible at a glance), kept for the purpose of arranging and digesting the matter he had so collected. And with this apparatus before him, he proceeded to his studies: the plan of which (had he been allowed to execute it fully) seems to have been, first, to consult the Homilies of the Church of England, and the documents illustrative of the history of the Articles, together with the works of the leading Reformers in the volumes of the Parker Society: then the later divines of the English Church, according as his subject led him to them; and for this purpose, besides those writers whom he most thoroughly loved and trusted,—Hooker, Leighton, and the like,—he had ever at hand the *Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology*, the volumes of which were arranged along his shelves under those of the Parker Society: next, the Confessions of the Foreign Protestant Churches, together with the works of Luther, Calvin, &c.: then the Canons of the Council of Trent, with the Roman Catechism, and some of the Romanist

writers: and, lastly, the works of the Fathers themselves, examining and collating passages in the originals from Ignatius down to Bernard. This plan was not indeed carried out with anything like completeness, as his illness was from the first a very great hindrance to its execution: and when he left England, he was able to take only seven or eight volumes with him; amongst which may be mentioned the *Pensées de Pascal*, Leighton's Works, Bungener's *Histoire du Concile de Trente*, and Niedner's *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche* (a work for which he entertained very great admiration). Still, such were his intentions; and it is the intention with which we are now concerned.

These note-books are very interesting to dwell on, presenting as they do a mass of extracts,—English, French, German, Latin, Greek, made by a thoughtful and scholarlike mind; and sometimes criticised and commented on by himself, in a manner which shows no ordinary penetration and judgment, united with that devout and heavenly spirit which breathes in all his words. Then, turning to the completed fragment of the little work which was to be the result of all this preparation, one cannot but smile, whilst touched with admiration of the simple humility of its author. And was this all that he thought himself equal to? all that he judged himself fitted to undertake? What lowliness of mind! what lovely unconsciousness of the qualities and attainments which others saw in him! And yet did he judge wrongly? was he mistaken in what he did? Mistaken surely in his estimate of himself,—mistaken perhaps in the form under which he would have given to the public the result of his labours. Yet not mis-

taken in *this*,—that no study can be too deep to substantiate and illustrate truth, even in the simplest statement of it; no pains can be too great, no wisdom too high, to bring to bear upon the blessed work of instructing Christ's little ones.

The improvement in health, which has been spoken of, soon proved a fallacious one, in spite of skilful medical advice and careful nursing; and it was determined to carry him back to St Leonard's, preparatory to that removal to the Continent, which was felt now to be the only measure by which the cough could be got rid of. The tone of his letters, it will be observed, is more deeply tinged with sadness than before.

TO MISS GORE.

Great Saunders, June 1856.

Many thanks for your letter, so full of Christian sympathy. It refreshed and, I hope, humbled me much. It is, indeed, entirely of God, if any show us any sympathy; for I feel myself more than ever to be an unprofitable servant—less than nothing, and a cumbrance of the ground. But the blood of Jesus gives me peace. It quite seems to me now as if I were entering on a new era of my existence. It may be, and I think will be, very short: one, the characteristic of which will be suffering, not work. If so, I feel quite content. Oh, may grace lead me higher still, and enable me, like Paul, to glory in sufferings.

Tell those whom you visit in your district to be earnest in seeking Jesus. Tell them that, when I was brought low, everything else failed me, as I knew it would; but Jesus seemed more glorious and all-sufficient than ever.

TO HIS LANDLADY, MRS. STEVENS.

Great Saunders, July 11, 1856.

It is a long time since I last wrote to you; and I have now only sad tidings to communicate—tidings which will grieve you, as they do me. . . . I am to leave England the middle of next month, and should not return till the beginning of June. It seems, therefore, an unnecessary expense to retain my rooms for a whole year: so I think of giving them up in October. It costs me a great pang to do so. I am much attached to those two little rooms, where I have spent so many happy hours; and I shall never forget all your kindness. . . . What a lesson are all these changes for us! God has overturned all my thoughts. I left home for four days, and have now been absent from my work nearly four months. We know not what a day will bring forth. But if we know Jesus, all is well: changes may come, but they will only drive us closer to the Rock. Cling, dear Mrs S., to the Saviour. Do not let the world, your occupations, or your little babe, keep you from Him. Give Him your whole heart; and follow Him fully. I am now in much discomfort, having a severe attack of gout, which the doctor has purposely increased to benefit my throat; and also three open blisters on my chest.

I remain,

Your sincere Friend and Pastor,

GEORGE WAGNER.

TO MRS * * * * * *.

Great Saunders, July 11, 1856.

My cough is much the same—better, I think, than it has been during my whole illness, and yet I cannot speak without coughing. The tenacity with

which it clings to me is quite surprising, considering the remedies which are used. I have another attack of gout. The doctor is delighted, and has put on a mustard poultice to increase it, in the hope of thus drawing the irritation from the throat. I have had it on thirty-five minutes, and my foot feels on fire. Through God's mercy, however, I have no shrinking from pain. What I dread is the rending the affections of the heart. With regard to Brighton, I cannot but feel that there is some uncertainty. I must leave England in August; and I do not see how I can leave it, without going to Brighton to arrange things, if health permit. Oh, how many thoughts and plans has God cast to the ground! It seems as if He were telling me that I was not to have my own way in anything. Amen! I desire joyfully to embrace His way, and walk in it.

TO THE SAME.

Great Saunders, July 15, 1856.

My cough is about the same. Gout going off. But I feel stronger since yesterday. The weather has been against me: but this afternoon is delightful. Another change in our plans. The doctor thinks it highly imprudent that I should go to Brighton. The keen air, and excitement of feeling, would bring on a relapse: and I should be unable to go south at all. He also wishes me to leave England by the middle of August at latest. So my last hope is dashed to the ground. I hope, however, that you will be able to stay with us at St Leonard's two or three days, to put the Report into shape. We hope to go there on Monday. I have just begun a farewell letter to my precious flock.

On his return to St Leonard's he immediately issued the farewell letter which he here speaks of;

which was printed, and in order to its better circulation, published also.

A few weeks' partial improvement at St Leonard's enabled him to make the necessary arrangements for his departure; and supplied fresh encouragement to undertake a journey, which else would have seemed most formidable. Algiers was now spoken of as his winter quarters; and on the 20th of August, he took leave of his father and mother; and, accompanied by his sisters, his cousin Miss Michell, and a man-servant, crossed from Folkestone to Boulogne: Paris, Fontainebleau, and Hyères, were proposed as halting-places on his southward journey; but after ten days at Paris, which seemed to do him no good, it was determined to stay no longer in that part of France, but to proceed farther south at once, in search of the warmth which appeared above all things to be necessary. The journey through Avignon and Marseilles to Hyères, was one of chequered hopes and prospects; for, whilst on one hand, the heat revived him, on the other, the fatigue of travelling, and the prevalence of the Mistral, or north-westerly wind, which is the scourge of many of those parts of France, threw him back sadly; and during the first four days at Hyères, he was very weak and poorly. The beauty of the place, however, greatly delighted him; and he was cheered by the arrival of his dear friend and former curate, Mr Clarke; who, having been compelled by Mrs Clarke's ill-health to leave England, had accepted the Chaplaincy of Hyères. His own letters once more will best show the state of his health, as well as that of his mind:—

TO MRS SIDNEY GURNEY.

Hyères, Oct. 1856.

You have heard already, I have no doubt, from some quarter, of our safe arrival in this place. We travelled very gently—three or four hours a day: and my sisters managed everything so beautifully that I had the least fatigue possible. The journey seemed to do my general health good; but the changeableness of the weather, and the *mistral* (a very cold and violent wind) irritated my cough, which remains much the same. I sometimes think that I am now *physically unfit* for this world, and require transplanting to a planet nearer the sun! Only how to get there? But I am waiting for something more possible and blessed—to be transplanted by the hand of Jesus into the presence of God,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—to enjoy the Father's everlasting love, to behold the Saviour's glory, and to be filled with the consolation of the Comforter. And must there not be ministries in Heaven, to employ our active powers, more delightful far than the ministries on earth? We minister now to an unseen Saviour by ministering to His people. How sweet it will be to minister to a *seen* Saviour with a direct and unwearied service! . . . This is a lovely place; the flowers and trees are magnificent, and so new. There are palm-trees, orange-trees, olive-trees, &c. The cactuses and aloes are quite gigantic—they make one feel very dwarfish. It is a fine place for the study of botany, and geology; but my weakness compels me to give up both. . . .

The Clarkes have arrived. They travelled rapidly; but Mrs Clarke bore the journey well. I was greatly interested in Mr Griffith's new appointment*. We must look upward to God to provide for our Home.

* To the Principalship of the College at Brighton.

TO MRS [LADY] LOCOCK.

Hyères, Oct. 11, 1856.

. . . The place is beautiful: and the flowers so new, and some so gigantic, that the eye is almost bewildered. I see and admire them; but am unable to prosecute my old pursuits—botany and geology. A voice from Heaven invites me to something better,—to study Jesus,—to hold communion with God in Him,—to contemplate the great and loving will of Him who hath chosen us in Christ Jesus. . . . How many things have dropped away from me now—above all, the ministry of the word of God. But in Jesus I feel that I have all things.

I took as my motto on leaving England, "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." Sorrowful I must be, with such an evil heart of unbelief. Sorrowful I must be, in a world which neglects Christ. Sorrowful I must feel, to be separated from my beloved flock and work, and to be afar from relatives and friends. But I may still rejoice, and ought always to rejoice, in God as my Father—in Jesus, in whom is the fulness of grace—in the Holy Spirit, as the Comforter—in the certainty that no promise can fail: all are *yea* and *amen* in Christ Jesus—and in the assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God." My precious flock I commend to Him and to the word of His grace. Oh, that He may make them profit by my absence, more than by my presence!

His stay at Hyères was not a long one—shortened by his conviction, which the opinion of his medical attendant confirmed, that the air and the water of the place did not agree with him. But where to go? for, in deference to his father's judgment, Algiers was now given up. After much consideration, it was determined by himself and

his elder sister, to proceed to Malta. She was now his only companion; for his other sister and his cousin had left them at Hyères, though the latter rejoined them before they embarked at Marseilles. At the same place, they fell in with the Bishop of Gibraltar and Mrs Tomlinson; whose report of Valetta, as uniting English comforts with a tropical climate, cheered them greatly. It was with revived hopes, therefore, that they embarked for Malta, on the 29th of October; and, the first day at sea being a fine one, the effect on the health of the invalid was still more encouraging. However, storms and rain succeeded, under the influence of a furious north-east wind (the *Gregale*), that sprang up; and when they arrived in the Quarantine harbour, he found the exertion of landing very painful to him, in spite of the kindness he met with, particularly from one of his fellow-passengers. They took up their quarters at Dunsford's Royal Hotel, in the Strada Forni, a house which had formerly belonged to one of the knights of Malta, and in which they found the spacious and lofty rooms fitted up with every English comfort, owing to the care and kind attention of their English landlady, Mrs Crockford. This circumstance proved a great alleviation of the sufferings of the invalid; for though he revived at first under the skilful and tender care of his medical attendant, Dr Galland, and was able at times to take exercise in a Bath chair, in which he was drawn along upon the Bastions, yet he was soon obliged to discontinue this. The winter was an unfavourable one, being peculiarly cold and stormy for Malta, and he was very generally confined to the house. Here he occupied himself as he had done in Eng-

land, during the earlier periods of his illness. He kept up his correspondence with his friends, though his letters were often delayed by weakness and unfitness for exertion.

TO MISS BIRD.

Valetta, Nov. 21, 1856.

You wrote to me more than once at St Leonard's to animate my faith and love; and your letters have remained long unanswered. . . . God has indeed been very gracious to me; and has given me manifestations of His love in Jesus, and of the majesty and infinite perfection of His will, such as I have not had in the days of my activity. What an access to God is opened to us in Jesus! How unspeakably blessed, sustaining and elevating is this communion! and yet how slow are our sinful hearts to enjoy it! But do not think of me as always, or generally, on the mount: or your prayers will not suit me. Long illnesses are very different from short ones: the trials are of a different kind: other graces are called into exercise. . . . Weakness of body and spirit seem to incapacitate me for joy; so low have I been brought by the relaxing climate of Hyères. Yet I knew that God was faithful—*I* might change; but He can never change. When everything else seems to depart, this remains—"Jesus Christ; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

He also devoted some time daily to his little work on the Articles; and, besides the books which he had brought with him, necessarily limited in number, studied more especially the writings of St Augustine and Bernard, which he had procured from the libraries of the place. It was his habit, too, to propose every day some text

for the consideration of his sister and cousin, on which he would converse with them at tea. On Sunday, they wrote down their thoughts upon the selected text; and he would add his remarks, corrective or supplementary. His journal, if so it may be called, consisted chiefly of reflections on his position, his past life, and his prospects, suggested by some text of Scripture; and shews the same habit of mind, which his letters have exemplified already, that of dwelling long and minutely upon one thought, and striving, by placing it in every possible light, to make it more completely his own. One or two extracts will be sufficient.

"Thou hast dealt *well* with thy servant."
(Psalm cxix. 65.)

1. Well, in seeking me, when I sought not Thee.
2. Well, in giving what I have not asked.
3. Well, in refusing what I have asked.
4. Well, in calling me to the service of Thy Church.
5. Well, in calling me to suffer instead of serve.
6. Well, in succouring me in temptation.
7. Well, in guiding my wandering feet.
8. Thou hast dealt mercifully with me, when I have sinned.
9. Bountifully with me, when I have been brought low.
10. Gently with me, when I have been in trial.
11. Faithfully with me at all times.

"Return thou unto thy rest, oh my soul!"
(Ps. cxvi. 7.)

Whither?—

1. To the world? Oh, no! I have tried it, and found it an empty thing.

2. To self? Oh, no! It was my chief tyrant, and is my chief plague.
3. To ceremonies? Oh, no! for they only avail when we seek Christ in them.
4. To domestic enjoyments? Oh, no! for soon they will be broken up.
5. To intellectual pursuits? No! They are noble; but cannot give rest.

Where, then, is rest to be found?—In Jesus only.

1. His bosom is its source. 2. His wounds its channel.
3. His Spirit its gentle stream.

Return, oh my soul! 1. For thou hast wandered.
Return, oh my soul! 2. For He bids thee, saying, Come!
Lord Jesus, I come, I come.

Owing to his cough, which made conversation painful, and even dangerous to him, he saw scarcely any one at Malta, except one of the chaplains of the forces, Mr Hare, who visited him ministerially; but he felt gratefully the warm interest shewn in him, especially by the Bishop and Mrs Tomlinson, and by the Governor and Lady Reid, and by some friends of the family, Colonel and Mrs Adams, as well as by other residents in Valetta. In the course of December, however, he and his relations were greatly delighted to receive a visit from his uncle, the Vicar of Brighton, who spent some time with them on his way to Egypt. Even with these near relations, the intercourse which he held was necessarily restricted by caution. His correspondence, too, with his friends at home, seems somewhat to have flagged, though still kept up in measure.

TO MRS * * * * * *.

Malta, Dec. 5, 1856.

It is long since I last wrote to you; but you will not suspect that it arises from forgetfulness, or from want of sympathy in the great work, which lies so very near my own heart, and which separation and suffering rather increases than diminishes. . . . Shall I not feel this more and more, the more the Spirit teaches me, and the more I have of the mind of Christ? . . . Jesus undertook the greatest, the most difficult, and the most agonizing of all works—the redemption of our souls. How much more ready than we are, ought we to be, to encounter difficulties and endure sufferings. I trust that God still continues to bless the Home. When you write, tell me as much as you can about it. I should like, too, to have the Report. . . .

I am thankful to say that I am stronger, and my cough is less troublesome. But my health is so variable, and so little causes a relapse, that I am thankful for the strength of the day, though feeling that all may be gone on the morrow. . . . And now farewell. May the unchanging love of Jesus be your strength. It is but a little while: and He that cometh shall come, and will not tarry.

TO MRS WAGNER.

Malta, Dec. 1856.

Very many thanks for the book which you so kindly sent me. To receive presents in a foreign land seemed to bring you all very near to us. I have often wished to express the love and gratitude which I feel for all the tenderness and care with which you nursed me. But when we were together, neither you nor my nerves would bear it. But now, from a foreign land, I cannot but open my heart, and tell you what I

feel. Earnestly do I pray, that God may do what I can never do—return your love sevenfold into your own bosom, and crown you with His own loving kindness and tender mercies. I shall leave it to A. to speak about my progress. There is too often a depressed tone about the accounts which invalids give of themselves. Malta suits A. and M. wonderfully. We enjoyed uncle Henry's visit of a week very much. He was full of activity, and full of affectionate consideration.

Give my warmest love to my father, and E.; and tell the Signora [Berrurier] that I am making use of the papers which she so kindly sewed for me. Remember me also affectionately to the St Quintins.

TO MISS E. WAGNER*.

Malta, Jan. 8, 1857.

I can scarcely have a greater treat on my birthday than in sending you a few lines. A birthday is always a very solemn day—a sort of landmark. But this one is especially so, standing as I do upon the brink of eternity. I am thirty-nine to-day. Subtract six years, and what must I feel and say, but that the remaining thirty-three have been years of patience and long-suffering on the part of God, and years of ingra-

* This sister had been the sharer of his Hebrew studies some years before; and having drawn up for her own use a Vocabulary of the proper names (geographical as well as historical) of the Old Testament, with derivations and explanations of their meaning, was urged by her brother to enlarge it, and to prepare it for publication, as a little Manual for the use of Teachers, to whom the more learned works of the kind are inaccessible. This request he repeated in his last illness, and promised himself to write an Introduction to it. Almost his last message to her was to the same effect. She therefore thought it a sacred duty to go on with her little work; which was continued with the help and under the supervision of Baron Bunsen, and was published in 1859, by Williams and Norgate, London.

titude on my part! What great mercies have I received, with little thankfulness; and oh, how many without any thankfulness at all!

I am reading now St Augustine and St Bernard, with great interest. The work of the former, *De Civitate Dei*, is, I should say, his longest and deepest treatise. It is full of philosophy and reasoning—very comprehensive, but not devotional. With regard to St Bernard, I began with his letters. They were interesting, as giving one an insight into the state of the world at that time; and perhaps still more so as displaying St Bernard's character, and his views of monastic life, &c. Several were written to those who had forsaken his monastery on account of its severity. With these he deals as if they had fallen altogether from Divine grace. I am now reading some of his sermons, which are more edifying. . . .

The death of Hugh Miller is indeed sad. It was his own excessive work rather than the bullet, that killed him: and for the first he is by far the most responsible.

TO MRS HARDCASTLE.

Malta, Jan. 18, 1857.

. . . I feel very strongly that, as there is no separation between Jesus and His people, but, on the contrary, the strongest, sweetest union—though He is within the veil, and we in a suffering world—so there is no separation between Christ's people. The *world* vainly talks of annihilating space. Jesus has done it long ago on the cross. He has fixed the invisible golden chain of love in the hearts of all His people, and no space can rend it. It is elastic, reaching from east to west, from north to south, and up to the highest heaven. . . . It is sin which separates, unbelief which divides us from one another. The Spirit producing faith unites us first to Jesus, and then to each

other. May the Spirit of God enable us to realize this hallowed bond! And the way in which it will be most strengthened and realized, is not by contemplating the graces of *Christians* with whom we are one, but by constantly looking to Jesus, with whom we are much more one. For the more we mount upward to our Sun, the tighter will the cord be drawn between our expanding hearts. . . .

Through God's great mercy I am more free from pain and suffering than I was. But two complaints, both extremely depressing, have so prostrated my strength, that in walking from one room to another I require an arm to lean upon. Oh, how forcibly should this teach me to lean on Jesus! I need not ask you to pray for me, for this I know you do. . . .

It will be seen from some expressions in the preceding letters, that though fully aware of his critical state, "on the brink of eternity," he yet believed that he was making some progress towards recovery; and his medical attendant desired to encourage this hope in him, as the most efficacious means of prolonging life, knowing that on spiritual grounds there was no need to warn him of his danger. His sister, however, for the last month, had been more fully apprised of the real state of the case. In a private interview with Dr Galland, she had pressed him to disclose the truth to her; and he, after sitting in silence for a minute, tenderly yet plainly told her all; the chest was very seriously affected; the only hope that remained, was that his patient might live long enough to return to England in the spring; but to make that hope a probable one, she must withhold from him the knowledge of his state; she must conceal her fears, and maintain an outward demeanour of cheerfulness, in spite of the aching

heart within. He had known instances of patients, who though quite prepared (as he thought) by God's grace to die, had yet been very injuriously affected by the announcement of their danger. It was due to the mother of the invalid, not to say anything which might risk his return to her.

Such, then, had been the terrible discipline of the last month to the affectionate sister, who watched so tenderly over her beloved and saintly brother; to hide the agony which throbbed within her own heart, and wear a countenance of hope she did not feel: while similar reasons forbade her to seek from England the sympathy that was denied her close at hand. Even in her cousin, the unwearied and devoted companion of her labours, she strove as much as possible to maintain a genuine, rather than a counterfeit hope. And yet, such gleams of real hope broke forth in January, from the apparent improvement of the patient, as to deceive even the physician himself; who trusted, and believed, at one time, that a return to England would be granted them. George had rallied sufficiently to take another airing in his Bath-chair; while every day he continued not only to read, and to write letters, but to work at his little book upon the Articles. A second visit too, from their uncle, the Vicar of Brighton, on his way back to England, cheered and revived them all. Before his departure, however, alarming signs had appeared; and he left Malta, prepared to break the fatal tidings to the family at home.

On the 22nd of January, these signs became so decided, that Dr Galland thought it his duty to acquaint his patient with his danger. The deafness of the latter, however, had so increased,

that the task, a very painful and delicate one under any circumstances, seemed more than he could trust himself to accomplish. Accordingly, when he came on his morning visit, he brought a paper, which was put into the hands of the invalid. The contents were as follows:—

"I thought, on your arrival here, that you might linger on with strength sufficient to get back to England in the summer. Later, though your powers of life seemed unequal to the rally required for this, I hoped, and kept on hoping, that a favourable turn at the last moment, in spring, might still enable you to reach home again. Perhaps I hoped so much, because I wished to hope more. I can, however, no longer justify it to myself to conceal from you that I have now quite lost all such hope. Your strength is failing rapidly; and it is neither in my power, nor I think in that of any human skill, to prevent your sinking ere long.

"I ought, perhaps, to have made you earlier acquainted with your real state. But I could not tell how far the announcement might affect you; and in the meantime I had to think, and did feel much, for your poor mother and sister. To you the transition will, I expect, be physically painless. Spiritually, I am confident, it will be the happy consummation of long and ardent yearning for the fulness of all good, after unreserved communion with the Author of all good. But knowing you as I do, and with the belief in you which I have just expressed, I beg you to take this announcement gently, to bear up, that your life may be prolonged as much as possible. Every day will be a long time to them; and when it does come, the blow will be hard enough to bear.

Comfort the anguish of those about you, and prepare for them the soothing remembrance of the peace of mind which attended you to the last. I need not write more. I was afraid I might not be able to convey to you in speech what I have said in writing."

He was left alone to read this paper; and when at last his cousin ventured in, she found him very cheerful, "his face radiant like an angel's." He inquired for his sister also, and told her how happy he was, and that he had been feeling for some time that he should not recover, but did not like to say so, lest he should appear depressed. "I know," he added, "in whom I have believed."

When Dr Galland came again, to see the effect of the announcement he had made, he was received with a sweet smile, and the words, "I am so happy!" When he came out of the room, he fairly wept; even the pulse had not suffered.

Up to this time, George Wagner had worked daily at his studies, and the preparation of his little book: but from that moment he felt that his work on earth was done, and laid it all aside. He never held up a book after this, and would have nothing but the Bible read to him.

It still remained, however, to set his house in order in two or three particulars; and asking for paper and a pencil, he wrote as follows:

TO G. H. M. WAGNER, ESQ.

My beloved Father,

I have long thought that my weak constitution could not stand out against bronchitis and diarrhœa combined. This has been confirmed to-day by

my skilful doctor, who says that it is rapidly giving way. To me this is joyful intelligence; for "to be with Christ is far better;" but I know that my dear relatives will feel it deeply.

With regard to the 1000*l.*, I believe that you have the power of ordering Coutts to sell out. If not, I wish to give you that authority. . . . It is my wish to give 800*l.* for the purchase of the Home, and the remainder (nearly 200*l.* I suppose) for the Mission, and the establishment (if possible) of Homes elsewhere. . . .

In conclusion, it is my earnest prayer that my departure may lead you all to live nearer to God: that we may be together with Jesus in heaven. Give my warmest love to my precious mother, and E., and my dear brother, and tell them all that I am quite happy.

TO MRS STOW.

(Appended to a letter written previously.)

. . . Jan. 22. Since writing the above, it has pleased God that my strength should fail. I hope before long to be in the presence of Jesus, and to meet your beloved husband. Hitherto God has sustained me in peace. Oh, may He keep me to the end from the assaults of the enemy! Farewell, dear friend. May Jesus be your increasing consolation in your weary life.

TO MRS * * * * * *.

My dear Friend and Sister,

Most of my friends have been too sanguine about my recovery; and you, I fear, have been among the number. I have never been so. Two complaints are more than my weak constitution could bear up against. It has given way, and I am gradually sinking—sinking, I hope, into the everlasting arms of

Jesus. Let not, my dear friend, these tidings move you. Pain you they will, but be not cast down. Let your faith rise triumphant over this trial, as it has done over so many others. Will you try to comfort my dear mother? I know no one whose words, by God's blessing, are so likely to comfort her as yours. Besides, in comforting others, God often comforts our own souls. I have made some arrangements about the Home, the execution of which I have left in my father's hands. You will doubtless hear from him. God, of his infinite mercy, keeps my soul in peace, though the enemy has assaulted me. Jesus is more to me than ever. But I must stop. Give my Christian love to Mrs ——.

There remained other letters to write; but he could bear no further exertion that day; and when afterwards he returned to the task, he wrote them by dictation. All the day he was cheerful and happy. In the evening, when his sister did not go, as was her wont, to her harp, he said, "Why should we not have some music?" and she played to him some of his favourite hymn tunes, reminding him of St Stephen's Church; especially Haydn's Austrian hymn, which he liked better than any other. On the next, and the subsequent days, he proceeded to dictate the letters which had yet to be written. The effort was a very painful one to him, and often interrupted by distressing fits of coughing; but at last it was accomplished. One was a letter to his curáte, Mr Olivier, containing the necessary directions in regard to his church and district; the other was the following farewell:—

A FEW WORDS FROM A DYING PASTOR TO HIS BELOVED FLOCK, TO BE READ TO THE CONGREGATION AFTER HIS DECEASE.

Dearly beloved in the Lord,

Ever since I have been separated from you, my heart has been more and more enlarged towards you in Christian love. I long more than ever for your salvation. Those truths which I preached to you—alas! so feebly—when amongst you, have been my unshaken support in the hours of sickness; and will be so, I feel confident, in the hour of death. I do not feel afraid to die; because Jesus died—yea, rather rose again, conqueror over death for Himself and His people. "I know in whom I have believed;" and trust that He will pass with me through the valley of the shadow of death.

And now, dearly beloved, let me earnestly beseech you, from my dying bed—a place more solemn than even the pulpit—to make your calling and election sure. Oh, make it the first and great object of your life to hold communion with Jesus—to live to Him—to walk with Him—to rest with simple faith on His atonement, and to follow His footsteps. Forsake all sin—avoid everything displeasing to Him; and, as you cannot take even one step without the grace of God, pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit, that He may take the things of Christ, and show them unto you.

One more point let me press upon your hearts. Such a time as this should be a time, too, of much prayer, especially that God may send you a pastor after His own heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. Pray for this great gift individually; and let the most intimate friends unite their prayers, and so come within the range of that beautiful promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Weakness bids me stop. May the Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd, supply all your need out of His own inexhaustible fulness. Amen.

His increasing weakness now confined him almost entirely to his bed; but he was moved on to a sofa, and wheeled for an hour or two into the sitting-room, which communicated directly with his bedroom. The cough was very distressing; but his patience and cheerfulness never failed him, and sustained those about him by the sweet influence they exerted. The nurse, who assisted in watching over him, said that "it was like nursing an angel." Two days after the announcement of his approaching death, he took the Holy Communion with his dear relatives; and ever continued to exhort and comfort them, as he found strength and opportunity to express himself. One day he said, "You must all use every effort that we may meet above; it is no easy thing to get to heaven." He afterwards continued, "It is a happy thing to feel that there is no suffering in heaven, but a still more blessed one, that there is no more sin." After a short pause, he added, "I would not be saved in any other way, than through the blood of Christ, for ten thousand worlds. It is a wonderful way."

Though his nights were often very distressing, yet by his own desire no opiate was given him, so that his head remained in a natural state, unclouded by aught save the effects of the disease. One night, when he was harassed incessantly by his cough, and suffering greatly from pain, on his sister observing to him tenderly that she feared he was "in the fires," he answered, "But Jesus is with me;" and added, with his usual consideration, "It is worse for you than it is for me." Yet

the longing to depart was strong within him, and he would say to her, "Pray for me, that the Lord Jesus may come quickly;" and as his pulse was found not to decline materially, but even sometimes to grow stronger, he observed, "Dr Galland does not encourage Christian patience. He always says my pulse is no weaker." When told by the physician, a day or two after, that there was some little increase of weakness in the pulse, he smiled and pressed his hand.

For some days after this, he said little; dosing great part of the day, and showing signs of increasing feebleness. But on Feb. 7, he beckoned to his sister, and said, "Yet a little while, and He that cometh will come, and will not tarry." Then feeling rather stronger some hours after, he said, "I think I shall be alive on your birthday. It is a slow process. I am kept alive by care, and nice things; and it is right to use the means. God's will be done." The chapter read to him that evening was the 21st of St John's Gospel; and he remarked, "What a blessed company there will be above! What vessels of mercy were St Peter and St John!" After prayers he said, "I know not how long I may be able to use my voice, and I should like to give you my ministerial blessing." They stood round him, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them solemnly.

The next day (Sunday) his cough was very troublesome, and his breathing suffered sadly from it. In the afternoon his sister, who was left alone with him, having sent the nurse out to get a little air and change, had a great alarm. She had been warned that the end might be suffocation, from a violent fit of coughing; and such a fit came on, so violent as to take away his breath;

and he himself looked frightened. But it pleased God to spare them the agony of so distressing an end. The struggle passed away; and he begged her, when she mentioned any painful symptoms to the physician, not to do so in the way of complaint, but merely as a simple fact. He had now become so weak, that he could not bear more than a few texts to be repeated to him at intervals. Dr Galland, when he came at night, pronounced him to be rapidly sinking, and hardly thought that the morning would find him alive. His sister sat by him all the night, holding his hand, or gently stroking his head to soothe him to sleep; but the wearing cough prevented this result: and, if she left him for a few moments, his eyes followed her, as if he feared to lose her. Once, in the course of the night, he was greatly confused; and said, "Tell me, dear, where am I? am I on the road home?"—"Yes, dear," she replied; "on the road home to heaven."—"But have I left Malta?" On being assured it was not so, he answered, "I am glad of it. I am glad I am not on a journey." Dr Galland, when he arrived in the morning, was quite grieved to find the time of suffering still prolonged; but the day proved on the whole a less painful one than the preceding; and his mind, when he was not dosing, remained calm and clear. When his sister spoke of her approaching birthday, he observed, "*I* shall have *two* birthdays this year." And, on her repeating to him the text, "This is our God for ever and ever. He will be our guide unto death," he added, joyfully, "Yes, and beyond death." A nurse, who had attended him earlier in his illness, came in unexpectedly that evening, to help his sister during the night. He gave her his blessing;

and said, "I shall not be many days here: perhaps not many hours." The night was a more peaceful one than the night before; but early on Tuesday morning (Feb. 10), a rattling sound was heard in the throat; the cough and expectoration ceased; and they saw that the last change was passing over him. All the little party of mourners assembled. He lay unconscious of their presence, but perfectly peaceful and still; while they stood around him, and strove to repress the utterance of their grief, till the last gentle breath had ceased.

He was buried in the cemetery at Valetta, overlooking the harbour. A ledger stone, with a simple cross in high relief, marks the grave; and a head stone bears the inscription—merely his name, with the dates of his birth and death, and the text which he had chosen himself for the purpose, "To be with Christ, which is far better." A tablet to his memory stands on the walls of St Stephen's Church, at Brighton; bearing a record almost as simple, followed by the words:—

THIS TABLET
IS ERECTED BY A CONGREGATION
WHO LOVED AND HONOURED HIM WHILST LIVING,
AND WHOSE HEARTS' DESIRE AND PRAYER IS
THAT THEY MAY BE ENABLED TO FOLLOW HIM
AS HE FOLLOWED CHRIST.

The reader will not wish to intrude into the sacred circle of family grief. What the loss was to those nearest and dearest to him, all who can appreciate him will understand. Nor need they be told of the piercing sorrow, of the sense of blankness and desolation, which fell on the hearts

of the many besides,—of the hundreds, it may be truly said,—who looked up to him as their spiritual guide, if not their spiritual father; to whom he was the witness and the messenger of God—the representative, more than any other human being, of that Divine Love, which, while stooping to sympathise with earthly cares and sorrows, keeps steadily and supremely in view the one great end for which we are created.

But his loss was more widely felt than this; and the graces of his character more widely acknowledged. From one end of Brighton to the other, all who knew him even by reputation (and few were those who did not), of all classes and creeds, united in the testimony, which spontaneously expressed itself, of the effect which his holy and consistent life among them had produced. The Bishop of the diocese hastened to offer his condolence to the parents of the deceased on the loss of their "amiable, excellent son. I have seldom read anything," he added, "so touching, so instructive, or so calculated to move a desire to be like-minded, and to strive to do likewise, as the account of the way in which he received the announcement of his approaching end, and of the farewell which he employed his remaining strength in writing. I knew his heart was in his Master's work; and here is a seal, by which all may know it too." The Brighton clergy could not find a more fitting spokesman than the Rev. H. V. Elliott, to express the sentiments which were universal among them. "I loved him with my heart's best love; for I saw in him the clear stamp of the likeness of his Master, whom he served so earnestly, so happily, so lovingly. A brighter career (alas! far too short) no minister

has run, who has left Brighton within our memory, whether by death, or removal of another kind. His memory is blessed."

And soon a general feeling arose that something more should be done in honour of his memory, than the mere expression of respect and sorrow. Contributions were invited towards the erection of a permanent building for the reception of the Penitents; which should also serve as a memorial of him, to whose "tender compassion, and unwearied zeal and energy, the Institution owed its origin." And the circular was followed by a placard, which made the simultaneous announcement of collections in seventeen of the churches and chapels of Brighton in aid of this well-chosen object. No other memorial (it was felt) would have been so acceptable to him, or would so well perpetuate his influence, extending it to other generations besides that one which he had "served" so faithfully, "by the will of God."

It would be hard to sum up the lessons, suggested by the life and death which now have been recorded. The reader will more willingly accept, what the biographer more willingly offers, some words of George Wagner himself, which all will feel to be as appropriate as they are forcible and true.

It is a blessed time to the believer in Jesus, when his race is run, his conflict is over. Death, though the penalty of sin, is not a king of terrors to the true Christian. Its sting is drawn. Its curse, like that of labour, is turned into a blessing. It is a merciful deliverance from twofold evil—from evil to come, and from evil that is past—from snares and temptations—from distress and perplexities—from weariness and desolation. Each living member of Christ's body is

'taken from distress and judgment," when his hour of departure arrives. And there is no *chance* in this, either in the manner or the time. The death of the saints is as precious to God as their lives; as fully arranged as their path of life is, and has been, by the Providence of God. We often speak of untimely deaths; but we little know what is timely, and what is untimely. We should alter our judgment in this matter, if we could see the whole. (MS. Serm. on Is. liii. 8, 9.)

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